



NATIONAL TRADE OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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NATIONAL TRADE OFFICE

2024 Annual Report

December 2024

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Forward by the Chief Trade Officer

As Chief Trade Officer, it is my privilege to present the National Trade Office's Annual Report for 2024. This report reflects a year of dedication, innovation, and collaborative effort by the NTO as we continue to champion Papua New Guinea's trade interests on both domestic and international stages.

The year 2024 has been marked by significant achievements, particularly in advancing the government's priorities on import substitution, quality infrastructure development, and trade facilitation. Our focused efforts on implementing the PNG Single Window Blueprint in collaboration with key stakeholders such as PNG Customs and NAQIA are a testament to our commitment to modernizing trade processes and enhancing the efficiency of cross-border transactions.

The NTO has also been at the forefront of preparations for the World Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan. Under the theme "Empowering Lives," Papua New Guinea's participation in this global event is an opportunity to showcase our rich cultural heritage, innovative capacities, and commitment to sustainable development. Our work in 2024 has laid the foundation for a successful presence at the Expo, demonstrating the potential of PNG as a vibrant contributor to the global community.

The NTO's active participation in the WTO MC13 in Abu Dhabi at the beginning of the year further demonstrated our resolve to uphold Papua New Guinea's strategic trade interests in multilateral forums. This engagement not only strengthened our global partnerships but also paved the way for policies and agreements that align with our national trade objectives.

I commend the Trade Policy Coordination and Facilitation Division for its tireless efforts in aligning its Key Result Areas with the National Trade Objectives. Their work has significantly contributed to the government's aspirations for economic resilience, sustainability, and inclusive growth. As we reflect on 2024, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Minister for International Trade and Investment, our development partners, and all stakeholders for their unwavering support.

I also acknowledge the dedication of the entire team at the National Trade Office, whose contributions are the cornerstone of our success.



Looking ahead, the NTO remains committed to empowering lives through trade, fostering innovation, and positioning Papua New Guinea as a competitive player in the global market. Together, we will continue to build a resilient and sustainable trade ecosystem that benefits our people and our nation.

RICHARD YAKAM
Chief Trade Officer
National Trade Office

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

AELM	APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting
AMM	APEC Ministerial Meeting
APA	Aotearoa Plan of Action
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CTI	Committee on Trade & Investment
CTMM	Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting
CTO	Chief Trade Officer
CSA	Centralized Service Agency
EDF	European Development Fund
EU	European Union
GoPNG	Government of Papua New Guinea
GOS	Group on Services
iEPA	Pacific Interim Economic Partnership Agreement
IPM	International Participants Meeting
JETC	Joint Economic and Trade Committee
KRAs	Key Result Areas
MAG	Market Access Group
MATA	Market Access & Trade Agreements
MC	Ministerial Conference
MRT	Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting
MSMES	Micro Small & Medium Enterprises exporters
NEC	National Executive Council
NTA	National Trade Act
NTO	National Trade Office
NTP	National Trade Policy
OECD	Organization for Economic Corporation and Development
PMNEC	Prime Minister's National Executive Council
PNGAS	PNG APEC Secretariat
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRISE	Pacific Regional Integration Support
RIP	Regional Indicative Program
SEZs	Special Economic Zones
SME	Small and medium Sized Enterprise
SOM	Senior Officials' Meeting
TAF2	Trade Advocacy Fund
TDC	Trade Development & Compliances
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
TOR	Terms of Reference
TPCF	Trade Policy Coordination and Facilitation
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
US ITC	US International Trade Commission's
WCO	World Customs Organization
WGTI	Working Group on Trade and Investment
WTO	World Trade Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Trade Office (NTO) has demonstrated resilience and commitment in addressing challenges and achieving progress throughout 2024 despite budgetary constraints. Building on the foundations laid in the last 3 years, the NTO's focus for 2024 centered on enhancing operational capacity, implementing key trade programs, and fostering Papua New Guinea's economic growth through trade policy and facilitation.

The NTO successfully secured an increased annual funding allocation of K1.2 million for 2024, allowing the office to expand its core programs and initiatives, addressing previous limitations in execution and planning. Strategic partnerships with development partners and international agencies supplemented operational funding and technical assistance.

In 2024, the NTO achieved full recruitment of its workforce, enabling a more robust implementation of its programs. Capacity-building initiatives, including staff training on trade negotiations and policy formulation, were undertaken in collaboration with international trade organizations. These programs improved staff productivity and empowered the NTO to deliver on its mandate effectively.

The office successfully transitioned to its newly customized headquarters in mid-2024, providing adequate space and infrastructure to accommodate its growing workforce and operational needs. This move addressed previous workspace constraints and enabled smoother workflow and program delivery.

The enactment of the Trade Defense Bill in early 2023 marked a significant milestone in strengthening PNG's trade frameworks. The NTO also finalized the National Trade Policy Strategic Implementation Plan, aligning stakeholders' efforts toward achieving the goals of the National Trade Policy 2017-2032.

These frameworks positioned PNG to better navigate global trade dynamics and secure economic benefits. The National Trade Portal, launched in March 2024, became a critical tool for information dissemination and enhancing the ease of doing business. By providing accessible online trade information, the portal contributed to reducing trade costs and improving PNG's trade competitiveness.

Additionally, the NTO initiated phase two of the portal's development to incorporate interactive features and expand its functionality. The NTO plays the coordinating role in PNG's preparations for the World Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan. As the lead agency, the NTO coordinated with sectoral agencies to ensure a comprehensive representation of PNG's cultural heritage and trade potential under the theme "Empowering Lives." Despite these achievements, the NTO faced hurdles in streamlining inter-agency collaboration and securing consistent funding for certain initiatives.

Additionally, geopolitical shifts in global trade presented new challenges that required adaptive policy responses. The groundwork laid in 2024 positions the NTO to achieve greater success in the coming year.

With a full workforce, robust trade frameworks, and enhanced operational capacity, the NTO is well-equipped to drive PNG's trade agenda. Key priorities for 2025 include finalizing trade agreements, expanding export opportunities, and maximizing PNG's presence at the World Expo 2025. The National Trade Office's performance in 2024 reflects its resilience and strategic foresight. Through targeted initiatives, resource optimization, and collaboration, the NTO has strengthened its role as a key driver of trade and economic growth for Papua New Guinea. With continued commitment and support from our trade facilitating agencies, stakeholders and development partners, the NTO is poised to make significant strides in advancing PNG's trade aspirations on the global stage.

INTRODUCTION

❖ Purpose and Scope

The primary purpose of this report is to provide our stakeholders, including government agencies, trade partners, businesses, and the general public, with a transparent and detailed overview of the National Trade Office's performance in the pursuit of its mission. It serves as a reflective lens through which we assess our achievements, setbacks, and the impact of our endeavors on the national and international trade landscape.

Within the pages of this report, you will find a thorough examination of our key activities, initiatives, and milestones achieved in the areas of trade promotion, policy, market access, trade development and capacity building. We delve into the economic landscape, exploring the trends that shaped the global market and, consequently, influenced our strategic decisions.

In addition to presenting a retrospective analysis, the report offers recommendations, outlining our strategic priorities for the upcoming year. It serves as a roadmap for our stakeholders, providing insights into the areas where we envision growth, development, and increased impact.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The National Trade Office (NTO) is the central coordinating agency tasked with implementing the National Trade Policy (NTP) 2017–2032. Its primary mandate includes advising on multilateral trading rules, managing Papua New Guinea's (PNG) trade negotiations and market access agreements, advancing trade facilitation initiatives, and leading trade promotion and development efforts and more importantly providing sound trade policy advice to Government.

Since its establishment in November 2020, the NTO has prioritized three primary work programs within its structure:

- **Trade Policy Coordination and Facilitation**
- **Trade Development and Compliance**
- **Market Access and Free Trade Agreements**

These core functions have been progressively expanded to align with the provisions of the recently enacted National Trade Act of 2023, ensuring a solid framework for supporting PNG's trade and economic aspirations.

The 2024 performance report marks the fourth annual report of the National Trade Office. This year has been a significant period of growth and progress, characterized by notable achievements and the resolution of several challenges that impacted operations in previous years:

Improved Funding Support - Strategic engagements with government stakeholders have resulted in increased budget allocations for key programs. This improvement enabled the successful implementation of several initiatives, including preparatory activities for PNG's participation in the World Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan.

Despite these advancements, challenges such as balancing limited resources with increasing demands and maintaining capacity in a competitive labor market remain. Nevertheless, the NTO continues to demonstrate resilience and commitment to its mandate.

The progress made in 2024 reflects the NTO's dedication to effectively contributing to the Government's economic recovery efforts and advancing Papua New Guinea's trade and development objectives.

Capacity Building and Enhanced Productivity - The newly recruited officers from the May 2023 intake have now reached optimal productivity levels, significantly improving operational efficiency. Ongoing capacity-building programs have further strengthened the NTO's human resource capabilities.

Relocation to a New Office Space - In 2024, the NTO successfully transitioned to its newly allocated office space after completing the necessary capital works. This relocation addressed longstanding space constraints and allowed for the installation of critical operational systems, enabling a more conducive working environment.

NTO'S VISION, MISSION & GOALS



Vision

"To be the champion and driving force to make trade a strategic tool for economic growth, development and prosperity of our country"



Mission

"To provide the necessary leadership, linking all trade regulators and practitioners and the oversight in the implementation of the National Trade Policy"

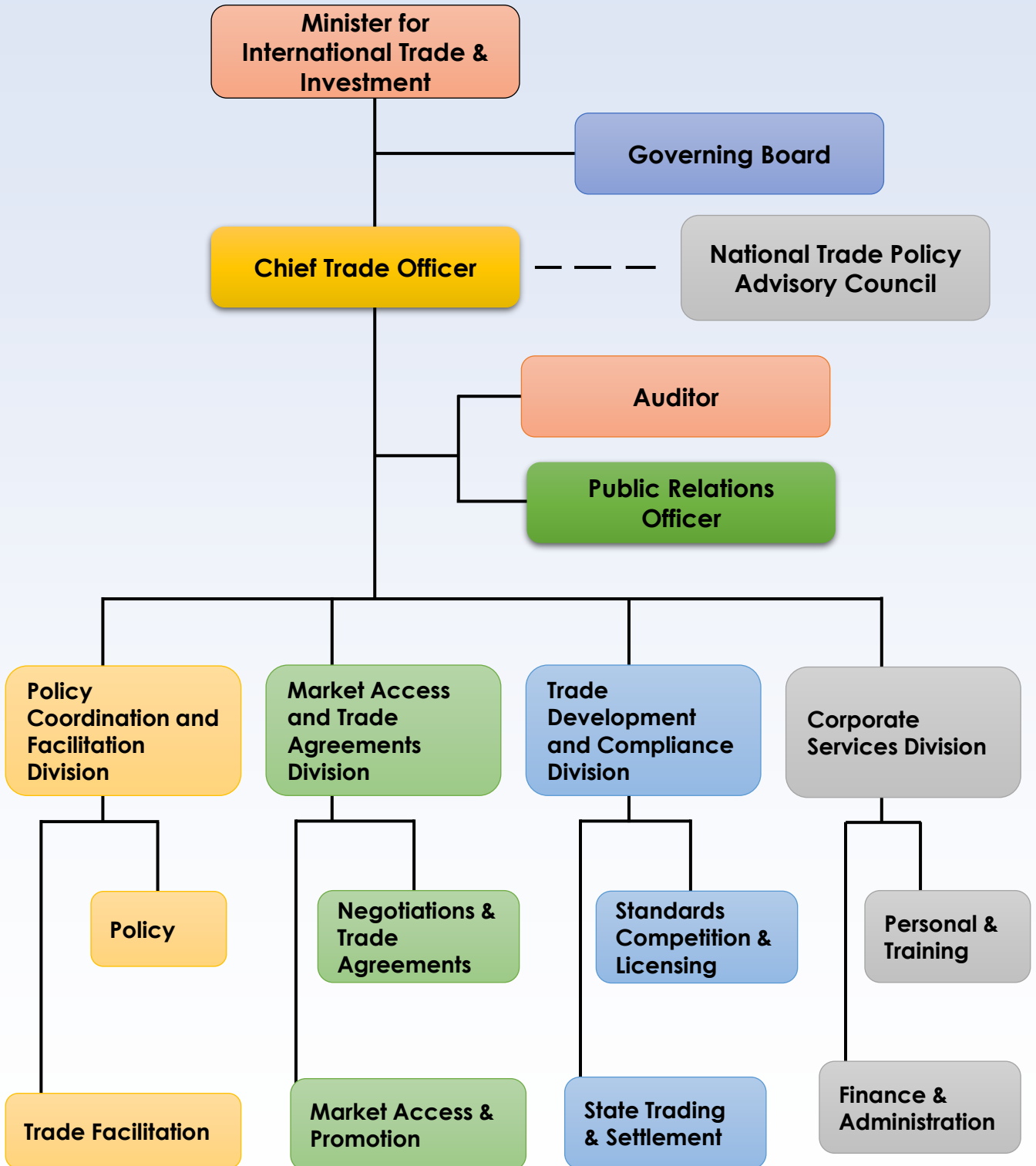


Our Goals

- To provide clear directions to all parties involved in the implementation of the trade policy measures by serving as a basis for unifying and coordinating actions across all stakeholders both domestically and internationally; and
- To support PNG to become an internationally competitive export-driven economy that is supported by a strong domestic trade environment.

NTO ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Our Vision will be pursued through effective implementation of the national Trade Policy in partnership with the private sector, development partners, trade facilitating agencies and other key economic agencies of the Government.



2024 KEY RESULT AREAS

NTO 2024 KRA's – IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT

As we navigate the complexities of achieving organizational targets, this report on the Implementation Progress of our Key Result Areas (KRAs) for 2023 serves as a strategic tool. It captures the steps made, barriers encountered, and strategies formulated to stay aligned with our primary mission and vision. It should be noted that these are extra activities apart from NTO's ongoing work programs.

Key Priority	1. PNG China Joint Feasibility Study
Program Brief	Received the report for the Joint Feasibility Study on the 19th of November 2024. We have exchanged the document with China, had two meetings to have the document ready but some convergence still exists on some text. We are working on it to resolve these issues and have the document finalized.
Outcome	The technical report which contains the sector-by-sector analysis on the potential cost and benefits was received on the 20th of December 2025.
Comments	We have done our own analysis and have a draft submission to inform NEC and seek further direction. However, we will await the discussion on the joint feasibility study to be completed and have the document finalized.

Key Priority	2. Trade Defense Bill (Anti-Dumping and Countervailing Measures)
Program Brief	There are two separate bills, and therefore, the FLC has taken more time in going through and finalizing it.
Outcome	FLC promised to send us the COC last week, but we have not received it yet
Comments	We have the NEC submission ready and should submit that to Minister as soon as the COC is received from FLC.

Key Priority	3. PNG National Single Window System
Program Brief	The PNG National Single Windows System Blueprint was completed last year and approved by NEC through NEC Decision Number 149/2024. The NEC also approved a funding of K50 million. We have developed a PIP on this and did submit it to the Department of National Planning already. Unfortunately, we were given only K5 million this year for this project.
Outcome	We hope to do the data analysing and some initial activities this year with technical support from development partners such as UNCTAD
Comments	Funding Limitation Reliance on Development Partners

Key Priority	4. National E-Commerce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan.
Program Brief	Finalized and submitted to Ministers Office with the draft NEC submission. We have yet to receive feed back from Ministers Office.
Outcome	Pending
Comments	Follow up needed.

Key Priority	5. Review of National Trade Policy Strategic Implementation Plan.
Program Brief	We did a comprehensive review of the Trade Policy Strategic Implementation Plan last year. We have a draft report which will aid the mid-term review of the National Trade Policy planned for this year.
Outcome	The mid-term review of the National Trade Policy, supported by the draft report, will provide a comprehensive assessment of progress, identify areas needing improvement, and establish revised priorities to drive the effective implementation of the policy.
Comments	Alignment with Current Economic Trends Stakeholder Engagement

Key Priority	6. Import Replacement Strategy
Program Brief	This activity is work in progress due to funding issues. We need to have data to develop this strategy and the non-availability of reliable data and the lack of funding to travel out and get the necessary data has delayed the progress. For instance, if we are targeting rice, we need to know how much we are producing and at what price and estimate how long PNG will produce enough rice to feeds its population. Hence, we did develop a PIP specifically for these and this has also been submitted to the Department of National Planning but no funding so far.
Outcome	We have a draft concept paper and the policy framework and is work in progress.
Comments	Data Collection Challenges Funding and Policy Advocacy

Key Priority	7. PNG's Accession to the Framework Agreement on Cross-Border Paperless Trade
Program Brief	We have had two stakeholder consultation workshops in close collaboration with the State Solicitors Office and the First Legislative Council and have finalized and have agreed to the framework itself.
Outcome	The state Solicitors Officer have cleared it and we currently working on the NEC submission for NEC's endorsement and for it to be tabled in Parliament.
Comments	Finalizing the framework and obtaining clearance from the State Solicitor's Office are significant milestones. Conducting stakeholder consultation workshops has been a positive step in fostering inclusivity.

Key Priority	8. Investment by Degage group of Vanuatu
Program Brief	Vanuatu Ferry Limited (Degage Group). A company based in Vanuatu showed interest to invest in PNG in Sea Transport, downstream processing of vanilla, Cocoa and Kava. They expressed their interest in early 2024. We have facilitated for them to meet all stakeholders and provided all the necessary information.
Outcome	We are happy that they have decided to invest in shipping providing sea transport services to all ports in the country. A first ship docked in Port Moresby, and I led the team to have a look.
Comments	The company executives will be here in the second week of February to lodge all necessary applications for permits and register their company with IPA. They have requested for a courtesy call on the Minister for International Trade and Investment while they are in the country.

Key Priority	9. Quality Infrastructure and Standards
Program Brief	Work on this activity is being put on hold after receiving technical advice for a PNG Quality Policy, to be put in place before any other activity in this space. NTO is supporting NISIT to work on the Policy, and we anticipate that the policy will be brought to NEC soon.
Outcome	NTO will than work with development partners to progress this work after the policy is put in place.
Comments	Prioritizing the PNG Quality Policy is a strategic approach to ensure a solid foundation for future activities in the quality infrastructure and standards space

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Outcome	NTO will then work with development partners to progress this work after the policy is put in place.
Comments	<p>Prioritizing the PNG Quality Policy is a strategic approach to ensure a solid foundation for future activities in the quality infrastructure and standards space</p> <p>The planned collaboration with development partners is commendable, as it can bring technical expertise and resources to support the implementation of the Quality Policy</p>

Key Priority	10. 2025 Osaka World Exposition.
Program Brief	Although we are late by 6 months, the preparations are progressing smoothly particularly for the EXPO proper.
Outcome	In terms of a Commercial activity outside of the Expo area, we have agreed to have this in Tokyo rather than in Osaka. We have identified a space for rent during the 6 months period but have yet to sign the lease agreement. We are waiting for Secretary Manua to inspect the property before signing the lease agreement which she is now on the ground doing that.
Comments	Comment on Timeliness and Coordination:

2024 PERFORMANCE REPORT

1. CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION

□ Division's Overview

The Corporate Services Division (CSD) has been pivotal in advancing key initiatives and managing critical operations for the National Trade Office (NTO) throughout the 2024 reporting period. Despite challenges, including the relocation from the Central Government Office to the new premises at Henci Haus opposite the Hilton Hotel, the division has successfully achieved significant milestones. A major accomplishment was the installation and setup of an ICT server by Vodafone, with an investment exceeding K1 million. This server now hosts essential platforms such as the Trade Portal, the NTO Website, internet, email, and telephone systems, and is prepared to support the upcoming Single Window Project in 2025. The division also confirmed 32 officers following their successful completion of induction training, awarded Certificates of Participation to three HR officers for completing Alesco Training, and laid the groundwork for the installation of the Alesco Payroll System early next year in collaboration with the Department of Finance. In addition, CSD effectively managed 12 casual officers under its portfolio and three casual staff assigned to Osaka 2025 projects. It also facilitated significant ministerial and project support by overseeing the transfer of funds for Japanese and Chinese consultants and procuring various assets in compliance with the Asset Management Act to support operations and projects, particularly for Osaka 2025. With a workforce comprising 52 permanent officers and 13 casual officers, the division has demonstrated exceptional performance, delivering on its responsibilities and achieving notable outcomes. The accomplishments of 2024 underscore the division's commitment to operational excellence and its strategic contribution to the National Trade Office's goals.

□ Key Functional Responsibilities

The Corporate Services Division's core responsibilities include:

- **Financial Management:** Oversight of salaries, contracts, and PGAS systems.
- **Budget Preparation:** Development of the annual budget submission.
- **Procurement:** Managing stationery supplies and consultancy services.
- **Staff Development and Training:** Implementing the Training Plan and conducting performance-based appraisals.
- **Reporting and Planning:** Preparation of financial, quarterly review, asset reports, and management plans, including the Corporate Plan, Annual Report, and other ministerial support services.

ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

Below is a summary of the activities implemented in 2024.

Activity/Program 1. CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION

Activity 1.1. Recruitment and Induction

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing: 32 officers were recruited at the end 2022. They have gone through the public servant's induction programs and awaiting appraisals for permanency in the public service.
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment of officers and induction to make them eligible for permanent roles.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32 officers recruited and inducted at SILAG. Permanent confirmation pending CTO's appraisal sign-off. Enables access to training, transfers, and promotions.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delayed performance appraisals due to delay in appraisals on their performance.

Activity 1.2. Vacant Position Recruitment

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pending: Finalization stage.
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment for 3 vacant funded positions to meet organizational needs.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and selection processes for 3 funded positions in progress. New staff will support operational efficiency.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None reported.

Activity 1.3. On-the-Job Training

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed: Training delivered.
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical training for students to enhance skills and exposure is an ongoing program of the NTO.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eight (8) final-year students from UOG and five (5) from PMTS gained valuable on-the-job experience. Contributed to workforce readiness and organizational support.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited resources to accommodate more students. Balancing student training with regular staff duties.

Activity 1.4. Payroll System Implementation

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed: Training of HR Officers delivered.
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of the Alesco Payroll System and staff training.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alesco system installed for payroll management. Three (3) HR officers certified and ready for implementation. Improved payroll efficiency.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial system setup and data migration challenges. Ensuring system familiarity among all HR staff.

Activity 1.5. Legislative Empowerment and Organizational Restructuring

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing: SCMC Submission.
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the absence of a Board, NTO's submission to SCMC for salary adjustment and mini restructure pending SCMC approval.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NTO officer's salary adjusted to CSA salary structure. Submission prepared with DPM's support for new structure, salary reviews, and additional positions.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays in SCMC review and endorsement process. Resource constraints for submission preparation particularly lack of an experienced HR Officer.

❑ OBJECTIVES FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD

The Following activities are yet to be completed.

Objective/Target	Details
Installation of Alseco Payroll System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the Alseco Payroll System to streamline payroll processes, ensuring accuracy, timeliness, and compliance with statutory requirements. This includes system configuration, user training, and integration with existing HR and accounting functions.
Installation of the Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the setup and implementation of IFMS to enhance financial reporting, budgeting, and management processes. The system will provide real-time data access and improve the division's financial transparency and accountability.
Recruitment of Advertised Positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the recruitment process for three critical positions currently advertised. Ensure the selection process aligns with organizational requirements, with qualified candidates onboarded promptly to strengthen the team's capacity.
Proposed New Restructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize and propose a new organizational structure to address existing gaps and accommodate key line positions critical for the division's functionality. The restructure will involve consultations with relevant stakeholders and align with the National Trade Office's strategic goals.

❑ FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND BUDGETING

The National Trade Office's accounting process currently operates on the PGAS system, a practice in place since the transitional period of the NTO. The delay in installing the Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) has been primarily due to the relocation of the office and the subsequent need for setting up IT servers and other essential infrastructure. The Finance and Budgeting section plans to prioritize the rapid facilitation of the Alseco Payroll System installation, followed by the implementation of IFMS.

Key activities carried out by the Finance and Budgeting section during this period include:

Key Activity	Details
Managing Funding Accounts	Effectively managing multiple funding accounts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Trade Office Operational Account • Ministerial Funding • State Equity Funding • PNG-China Feasibility Study Funding • Osaka 2025 Funding
Financial Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing and providing detailed quarterly financial reports for all managed accounts to ensure transparency and accountability.
Coordination with Key Government Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaising with the Treasury, National Planning, and Finance departments to secure monthly warrants and address outstanding warrants critical for office operations.
Advisory Support for Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing concise financial briefs to the Chief Trade Officer to support informed decision-making on activities aligned with available funds and approved funding allocations.
Statutory Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering financial reports, asset reports, cash and asset control reports, and quarterly financial reports to relevant agencies in compliance with the Public Finance Management Act.
PIP Funding for Trade Facilitation Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseeing the release of Public Investment Program (PIP) funding allocated for Trade Facilitation Agreements, with a planned implementation timeline extending over the next five years.

❑ PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

The Procurement and Asset Management section oversees the acquisition, recording, and maintenance of assets while ensuring compliance with established protocols.

Key activities and updates include:

Key Activity	Details
Asset Registry and Inventory Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining a comprehensive asset registry and inventory register for all procured assets. • Effectively managing legacy assets inherited from the former Department of Commerce, Trade, and Industry, alongside new assets acquired by the National Trade Office.
Disposal of Old Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying older assets, particularly those of lesser value and with technical faults, that are no longer functional or required. • Ensuring proper disposal procedures, with Chief Trade Officer approval, for destruction of unusable assets.
New Equipment Procurement and Management	<p>Procuring and managing new equipment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computers, laptops, printers • Office furniture (chairs, tables) • Stationery and other essential supplies • Administration officers oversee asset management under the close supervision of the Director for Corporate Services Division (CSD).
Vehicle Fleet Management	<p>Managing a fleet of 13 vehicles, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 new vehicles. • Older vehicles, with plans to tender out the oldest units to the public. • A formal request for tendering has been submitted to the National Procurement Commission (NPC), and the process is currently in progress.

❑ TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

The division prioritizes capacity building and professional development for its staff and other stakeholders.

Key training and development activities include:

Key Activity	Details
Short and Long-Term Training Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers have participated in various short courses aimed at enhancing their skills and competencies. Preparations are underway to sponsor officers for long-term training programs, with priority given to those who have served the agency for more than three years and are accepted into second-degree programs.
On-the-Job Training (OJT) for Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The agency welcomes final-year students from various institutions for on-the-job training opportunities. Conditions for participation include students covering their own costs for wages, stationery, and meals during the training period.
Professional Development for Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for short-term professional training are made available to all staff. Training programs are both domestic and international, providing a diverse range of learning experiences to support staff growth and organizational development.

❑ CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

The division has faced several challenges that have impacted its operations and performance. Key challenges include:

Challenge	Details	Proposed Solution
Manpower Shortages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The division is understaffed, with vacant critical positions such as two Assistant Directors and several technical officer roles. This has strained existing staff and delayed the implementation of initiatives like the Alseco Payroll System and IFMS. 	Expedite the recruitment process for critical positions and consider creating additional roles in the upcoming restructure.
Delayed Implementation of Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of the IFMS has been delayed due to logistical challenges such as office relocations and IT infrastructure setup. These delays hinder modernization of financial management processes. 	Prioritize the completion of IT infrastructure setup to enable IFMS implementation and enhance operational capabilities.
Aging Assets and Resource Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued use of older assets, including vehicles and equipment, affects productivity. Slow disposal process of older assets impacts resource optimization. 	Work closely with the National Procurement Commission to fast-track the tendering process for aging assets.
Training and Development Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited long-term training opportunities and staffing shortages affect employees' ability to participate. 	Allocate resources to establish a structured training schedule, allowing staff to benefit from professional development without disrupting operations.

2. TRADE POLICY COORDINATION AND FACILITATION DIVISION

❖ Division's Overview – 2024 Reporting Year

The Trade Policy Coordination and Facilitation Division has made significant strides in 2024, achieving substantial progress across its Key Result Areas (KRAs).

The division maintained its commitment to aligning with the National Trade Office Objectives and fulfilling the government's aspirations, as outlined by the Minister. The year's achievements underscore the division's pivotal role in advancing Papua New Guinea's trade agenda. A central focus of 2024 has been the drive toward import substitution and replacement. Under the direction of the Chief Trade Officer (CTO), the division spearheaded initiatives in Quality Infrastructure, presenting key outcomes to National Planning in July 2024. These efforts aim to bolster local industries and reduce dependence on imports while enhancing the quality and competitiveness of domestic products.

The division has also played an instrumental role in the implementation of the PNG Single Window Blueprint. This multi-year initiative, which runs through 2026, emphasizes collaboration with key regulatory bodies such as PNG Customs, NAQIA, and other stakeholders. The division has ensured that the National Trade Office (NTO) remains a central coordinating body for this transformative trade facilitation project. Another key highlight of the year was the division's participation in the WTO MC13 held in Abu Dhabi in February 2024. The division provided critical support to the Minister and delegation, guiding negotiations and discussions during the conference. The outcomes from the Ministerial Conference are expected to positively influence PNG's trade policies and agreements, reflecting the country's strategic priorities on the global stage.

As the year concludes, the division remains steadfast in its mission to enhance Papua New Guinea's trade position through coordinated policy development, strategic facilitation, and collaborative engagement with domestic and international partners. With the groundwork laid in 2024, the division is well-positioned to achieve even greater success in the coming years.

❖ **The main functions of the Trade Policy Coordination and Facilitation Division are to:**

- Lead & coordinate the development of trade policy and related export strategies to enhance welfare gain;
- Provide sound Policy advice to Government;
- Lead mainstreaming of trade policies in national development strategies;
- Lead the development and coordinate the implementation of Trade facilitation Strategies and Programs;
- Lead monitoring and review of trade related strategies action plans;
- Coordinate trade-related assistance projects;
- Coordinate inter-institutional roles and participation on trade related matters;
- Provide strategic advice to other Government departments and institutions on advancing PNG's trade interests and partnerships with principal trading partners.

ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

Below is a summary of the activities implemented in 2024.

Activity/Program 2. TRADE POLICY COORDINATION & FACILITATION

Activity 2.1 – Review of the National Trade Policy (NTP) – Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP)

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing – Draft review in Place to help the Mi-Term Review of the National Trade Policy
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work continued in 2024 on the SIP in obtaining status updates on the implementation by various trade and trade-related stakeholders on specific policy measures mandated under their respective roles and responsibilities. The activity was undertaken by way of an inter-agency round-table workshop on the objectives of the SIP update given the time-lapse from the time the final draft was compiled in 2017 to current. The main aim is to gather as much as possible, a comprehensive update and to reflect these in the SIP document to be brought forward to NEC for endorsement. A total of 46 stakeholders were identified. Most stakeholders provided verbal updates during the workshop of which five (5) have submitted formal written updates on their status of implementation. There were one-on-one consultations with stakeholders conducted as well.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEC will be provided with an updated implementation plan of the National Trade Policy to deliberate on and endorse. Some policy measures may have already been implemented or achieved.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With regard to the SIP, the Branch experienced lack of funding issues that stifled the completion of the activity in 2024. The activity is a fundamental key result area of the Branch and the Division however, the shortfall in funding. A total of K210, 000.000 was included in the budget submission for 2024 that would cater for national consultations in Port Moresby and provincial consultations including press releases however these have not eventuated.

Activity 2.2. 13th WTO Ministerial Conference

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed.
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PNG made a stance on developing its fisheries industry and will not support multilateral rules impeding on that ambition.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PNG's interest secured in the multilateral trade rules – based system especially in fisheries subsidies among others.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding was provided to cater for this activity.

Activity 2.3. Memorandum of Understanding with the PNG Customs Service.

Status:	• Completed.
Program Brief:	• Given the cross-cutting role of the Office and the need for collaboration and information sharing with other stakeholders, the Branch undertook inaugural work on establishing a formal mechanism to achieve this objective. This was realized by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the PNG Customs Services and the National Trade Office on 5th July 2024. The MOU represents the commitment between the two agencies to recognize the importance of each other's mandated roles, functions and responsibilities in the area of trade and trade-related activities. It aims to establish cooperative relations based on the need to share updated and real-time trade-related data and information for trade policy analysis, decision-making, negotiations and ultimately providing appropriate advice to government. The understanding covers matters relevant to data on PNG's trade flows, market access, non-tariff barriers or measures, trade policy instruments necessary to expand the export base and/or protect our domestic industries, citizens, flora and fauna, and on any other trade-related matters. It will further ensure factual information is available for pursuing PNG's position in international trade policy. This initial MOU paves the way for more MOUs with other stakeholders.
Outcome:	Signed MOU in place for implementation
Challenges	• Financing of this activity only included the payment for media publications and press releases which amounted to K7, 202.80.

Activity 2.4. PNG's Outstanding WTO Notifications.

Status:	• Completed.
Program Brief:	• PNG has a backlog of outstanding notifications under most of the WTO annexed agreements. These have to be consulted on and compiled so that trade-related policies and practices are clear and made public under PNG's WTO obligation on transparency.
Outcome:	
Challenges	• There is a financial need to have a stakeholder workshop on the notification process to be run by an expert. The funding will be for the venue and related costs to run the activity.

Activity 2.5. WTO Fisheries Subsidies Negotiations.

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing.
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently under negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) is phase two of the Fisheries Subsidies. Phase one included the preamble, Subsidies contributing the Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing, Subsidies to Overfished Stocks, Transparency and Notification, Technical Assistance and Capacity Building including the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Funding Mechanism. The important aspect of the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Negotiations is aligning with the UNSDG 14.6 which it is trying to address and curb Subsidies contributing to Overcapacity and Overfishing. This is what is now in phase two of the negotiations. An NEC Submission dated 24 August 2024 for the ratification of the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement referred to here as phase one has been put forward however; no deliberation by NEC has eventuated.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite progress in phase one of the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement, PNG's active participation in phase two negotiations has been limited due to funding constraints, affecting the country's ability to advocate for its domestic fisheries industry development and align with UNSDG 14.6 during critical bilateral discussions.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding requirements for this activity is to cover officials travel expenses to attend negotiations in-person at the WTO Secretariat in Geneva Switzerland whilst technical briefings and workshops are held virtually. Trade and fisheries officials being funded to attend bilateral discussions and putting forward PNG's position in terms of domestic fisheries industry development at the WTO will be good however; funding constraints have hampered this attendance. Funding should be allocated for attendance at bilateral discussions as that is actually when negotiations take place.

Activity 2.6. PRISE

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Ongoing;
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Branch together with the Director are the focal point for all PRISE funded programs in PNG. These programs are funded by EUEDF11 funding.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secured assistance for Single Window Blueprint. • Awareness on iEPA for the Highlands Region • Secured assistance for review of TRP for the Department of Treasury. • Secured assistance for development of Vanilla standards
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interest by other agencies. • Connectivity issues preventing effective participation in NATCAL zoom meetings.

Activity 2.7. Electronic Single Window (ESW) Project

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing. • ESW Blueprint has been finalized and printed. However, the remaining ten agencies that was not captured in the blueprint are currently consulted and will be included. The Implementation of the ESW will start next year, 2025.
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Single Window is a centralized platform that enables traders and government agencies to submit and exchange trade-related information and documentation through a single point of entry. This integrated approach eliminates redundant paperwork, reduces processing time and costs, and promotes transparency and collaboration among stakeholders involved in international trade • The Blue print which has been prepared by an UNCTAD consultant and funded by EU under PRISE Project provides the options on the type of single window to be adopted by PNG that best suits our economies environment and challenges.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Division initiated a study tour to Thailand and Singapore to gain insights into the best practices and challenges in implementing ESW systems in the country. ii. ESW Blueprint Handover Ceremony: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal handover ceremony was conducted to handover the ESW blueprint that was developed by the United Nation Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to the Minister of International Trade and Investment. iii. NEC Endorsement: The ESW proposal was successfully endorsed by the National Executive Council (NEC) with a funding of K50 million over a three-year period. However, the budget was reduced down to 5 million Kina only under the 2025 budget. The first and second quarter of 2025 will be focused on system development and data harmonization due to budget constraints.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow response by agencies in mapping out their processes and procedures for inclusion in the Blueprint.

Activity 2.8. APEC

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Ongoing; • Support to APEC Secretariat and other agencies.
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Branch is responsible for market access group. However, another Division is responsible for CTI meetings but has not been facilitating internal APEC related work programs. Therefore, the branch response to APEC commitments that are being requested directly by the APEC Secretariat and other agencies for inputs.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting of the Concept Note on Refurbishment of Electronic products • Comments on Concepts Notes from other economies.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence or clear coordination by the relevant division within the NTO, leading to lack of updated information, reports and workplans on APEC. Lack of funds also limits participation from the branch.

Activity 2.9. Regional Connectivity Strategy

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing; • Regional Consultations.
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The branch is responsible for representing PNG and providing PNG's inputs into the strategy.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first series of consultation has been completed and awaiting circulation of the draft strategy by PIFS.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding to include more agencies.

Activity 2.10. Trade Facilitation Road Map:

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing; • Currently awaiting UNCTAD to finalize the first draft of the roadmap, which will then be shared with us. We anticipate to complete this in 2025.
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) currently assisted the branch in developing a comprehensive Road Map that will outline a strategic plan to further enhance the country's trade facilitation landscape. By identifying key priorities, setting clear objectives, and outlining actionable steps, the roadmap will guide the implementation of reforms and initiatives to optimize trade processes and reduce trade costs. The development of this Roadmap is ongoing.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activities for the roadmap have been identified and submitted to the UNCTAD team.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of collaboration and communication between agencies.

Activity 2.11. Pacific Quality Infrastructure (PQI)

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing: • NISIT in the drafting process of the National Quality Policy (NQP).
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pacific Quality Infrastructure (PQI) Initiative is one of the most important ventures that was initiated and housed in the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). One of the many challenges of the Pacific Island countries is meeting the standard and requirements of the developed economies' markets around the world. • Countries that have signed and ratified the iEPA with the EU are still faced with the challenges of meeting market requirements. The other challenge is the in-country testing ability and capacity of the laboratories within each country. • There are labs in Pacific Island countries, but the challenges and difficulties are the test results from the samples on products, and whether the result will be accepted by the importing countries in the overseas market. This brings the question of credibility, accreditation and use of either international standards or domesticated standards that are being used to qualify the results of the test(s). • Through this initiative the Pacific hopes to foster positive and practical steps Pacific nations can take on developing a thriving economy as a basis for prosperity, health and well-being by building through quality and standards.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The successful election of Mr. Christopher Mosoro, Executive Manager, Accreditation Division from NISIT as the Chair of the PQI, Pacific Island Testing Committee (PITC) with NTO to provide policy support.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying a Reference Centre or Central Testing Facility in the Region. 2) National Quality Policy. 3) Update of records and stock take of all testing equipment and labs in the country. 4) PIFS to look into ways to assist the forum island countries to meet requirements and standards on the market requirements, upgrading of their labs, the accreditation processes and to train more suitable technical officers to undertake the testing and work in the labs.

Activity 2.12. Import Replacement Framework:

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing. The Branch continuous to actively engage in the trade facilitation policy
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Branch collaborated with the Policy Branch to develop an import replacement framework aimed at reducing reliance on imports and promoting domestic production.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In alignment to the framework, the Branch attended an event hosted by the New Laigap District in Enga Province and proposed to sign an MOU between the Laigap District Administration and District Development Authority to support farmers in Enga Province by improving production standards, facilitating direct market linkages, and infrastructure development for vegetable farming, Aquaculture and inland fish farming.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More stakeholder consultation and support from donor partners.

Activity 2.13. Trade Facilitation Policy and Capacity Building:

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing. The Branch continuous to actively engage in capacity building initiatives.
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving trade efficiency and competitiveness through policy development and skills enhancement.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to Trade (TBT) Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A specialized training program was organized to equip relevant stakeholders with the knowledge and skills to submit notifications on TBT measures using the iPing System, ensuring compliance with international standards. Trade Facilitation Notification Training: A half day workshop was conducted to enhance understanding and compliance with trade facilitation notification requirements, focusing on outstanding articles and those schedule to be notified.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding constraints to run more trainings to equip relevant stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and skills as there is lack of awareness and understanding on trade facilitation agreement among businesses and stakeholders. Inadequate infrastructure to support the trade.

Future Outlook	Details
ESW Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalizing the ESW system design and development, conducting pilot testing, and deploying the system to agencies.
Trade Facilitation Policy Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to develop and implement trade facilitation policies and procedures aligned with international best practices.
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizing training programs to enhance the capacity of customs officials, NAQIA, NISIT, and other stakeholders in using the ESW system and other trade facilitation tools.
International Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening collaboration with regional and international organizations to stay updated on the latest trends and best practices in trade facilitation.
Prominence of NTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued participation with other departments and agencies has highlighted the importance of trade in economic development.
Increased Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Division anticipates taking on more responsibilities and programs within NTO or in collaboration with other departments and agencies in 2025.
Feasibility of NTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The feasibility of NTO has been recognized, but more assistance and advice on trade matters need to be provided to others.

3. TRADE DEVELOPMENT & COMPLIANCE DIVISION

□ Division's Overview

The Corporate Outcome for the National Trade Office relevant to the responsibilities of the Division is Outcome #3: Trade actors and regulators comply with domestic and international trade regulations, standards, and processes to increase international trade participation. The Division's work was further guided by its Divisional Work Program Objective: To facilitate the development, coordination, and implementation of technical trade standards.

In addition to ongoing work programs—such as the processing of log export licenses, certificates of origin, APEC activities, and other ad-hoc tasks that arose throughout the year—the Division focused on achieving three (3) main Key Result Areas (KRAs): Trade Defense Bill (Act), 2024 PNG E-commerce Strategy & Roadmap 2024 and PNG's Accession to the UNESCAP Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade (CPTA) in Asia and the Pacific

The Trade Defense Bill, which consists of two separate bills—the Anti-Dumping and Countervailing Duties/Measures Bill and the Safeguard Measures Bill—is in the process of receiving the Certificate of Compliance (COC) from the First Legislative Counsel (FLC). The complexity of handling two separate bills caused delays in obtaining the COC. Once the COC is provided, the submission will proceed to the National Executive Council (NEC) for approval, paving the way for Parliament's enactment.

The PNG E-commerce Strategy and Roadmap was finalized at the technical level and approved by all key stakeholders in June 2024. With support from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the document was finalized and published by the National Trade Office in July 2024. The only remaining step is its formal endorsement by the NEC. All necessary submission documents have been prepared and are awaiting direction from the Minister to proceed.

The UNESCAP Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade (CPTA) has received the necessary legal clearance from the Office of the State Solicitor. The NEC Submission is now being finalized for presentation by the Minister. Once approved by the NEC, the next steps will include Parliament's ratification and the formal deposition of instruments and certifications with UNESCAP through diplomatic channels to complete PNG's accession process.

The Division successfully completed the first stage of facilitating and coordinating the entry of Degage Shipping Company into PNG. The next steps for fully establishing the company's operations in PNG will be undertaken in the upcoming year as part of the Division's ongoing work plan.

❖ **Generally, the main responsibilities of the division are to:**

- Coordinate review and implementation of policies on NTMs, NTBs and TBT policies, & Costs of doing trade in Papua New Guinea;
- Coordinate APEC work on Tariffs, NTMs and Services and Trade Ministers' Meetings;
- Facilitate development, implementation and enforcement of policies on SQMT, IPR, Competition & Consumer Protection in close consultation with the lead (key) agencies;
- Facilitate development, implementation and enforcement of accreditation policies;
- Inspect, issue permits & licenses;
- Facilitate review of policies & procedures thereof; and
- Coordinate administration of trade remedies and dispute settlement

ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

The report provides update on key activities that was agreed as priority for 2024.

Activity/Program 3. TRADE DEVELOPMENT & COMPLIANCE

Activity 3.1. National Trade Defense Bill (Act) 2024

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Legislative Counsel (FLC) is about to issue the final Certificate of Compliance (COC) for us to proceed to NEC for its approval and subsequently Parliament for its enactment. NEC Submission and other accompanying documentation are being finalized awaiting the COC from FLC.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FLC is about to issue the COC for us to proceed to Parliament for its enactment through prior formal approval at the NEC.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays in Issuance of the Certificate of Compliance (COC) • Bureaucratic or Political Bottlenecks in the NEC Approval Process

Activity 3.2. National E-Commerce Strategy & Roadmap

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PNG's E-commerce Strategy & Roadmap has been finalized, endorsed and published by NTO in collaboration with PIFS, and key/relevant stakeholders from the public and private sectors.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PNG E-commerce Strategy & Roadmap Booklet published July 2024.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation and Stakeholder Coordination • Capacity and Resource Constraints

Activity 3.3. PNG Accession to the Framework Agreement (FA) on the Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific

Status:	
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal clearance for the Accession has been given by the Office of the State Solicitor (OSS) in October and the necessary NEC and Parliament's documentations are about to be brought to them through the Minister for formal approval and ratification respectively.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OSS legal clearance has been given confirming compliance with domestic laws, regulations and processes. NEC Submission and Parliament's Statements have been finalized for their respective approval and ratification.
Challenges	

Activity 3.4. Development of the Apiculture Industry in the Pacific

Status:	
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project proposal focuses on identification, development, strengthening the production and export capacity of the apiculture industry in the Pacific region with the support of the PIFS, where the final project could be funded by development partners/ donors. The initial focus of the project proposal is on seven countries with high and medium apiculture potential, including those that are disease-free (Niue and Samoa) and those that have varroa mites and/or undesirable genetics (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, PNG and Tonga).
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PIFS and the Consultants will provide their analysis based on the outcome/feedback from the NZ Workshop on the next steps that each country, including PNG, will take in proceeding to develop apiculture with close consultation and support from PIFS and the consultants.
Challenges	

Activity 3.5. UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) Trade Official Visit to PNG

Status:	
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Division provided support and assisted MATA Division with the facilitation and coordination of the visit to PNG by a senior official from UK's FCDO.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since a key Work Program of the MATA Division, the key/main outcomes are captured in their Report
Challenges	

Activity 3.6. Export Facilitation

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed for 2024 and on-going for this year
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating export licenses for round logs and Certificates of Origin Verify COO Forms Stamping and Signing COOs and Export Licenses Issue COOs and Export Licenses Processing GSP Certificate of Origin Issuance of GSP Certificate of Origin
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issued Export Licenses 793 and 3,390 Certificates of Origin With the number of Export Licenses and COOs issued, we have collected fees of K339,000.00 for COOs and K229,302.90 for Export Licenses.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To shorten process, exporters purchasing COOs here and if possible collecting export license fees and Application Fee Payments here at NTO.

Activity 3.7. APEC

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed Quality Concept Note Report Produced
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Management Training Attended MRT and provide interventions/briefs Attended SOM 3 and make interventions Attended AMM
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade of Remanufactured/Refurbished Consumer Electronic Products in APEC developed NEC Submission made
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Constraints/Funding issues.

Activity 3.8. VANILLA

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report Done
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended the Drafting of the Vanilla Codex Standard • Research and Investigation Done and Samples Collected from farmer • Developed domestic Standard for Vanilla (Voluntary Sustainable Standard and Vanilla Export Guide) • Currently reviewing PNG Spice Act with all stakeholders to include vanilla and make voluntary sustainable standard mandatory
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonization of PNG Vanilla Standard with vanilla producing countries for adoption into Codex in 2025, June. • Implementation of Vanilla Sustainable Standards through EU-STREIT Expansion Program for farmer-to-farmer training and commercial production in Kutubu LLG, SHP. • Review of Spice Act incompleteness with drafting to soon begin
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding, testing facility, farmers capacity building, most work stalls with PNG Spice Industry Board.

Activity 3.9. KAVA

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report Produced
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kava Value Chain Analysis done with specific study of Fiji Kava value chain by NTO and DCI in Fiji • Adoption of Regional Kava Development Strategy Framework
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Kava Strategy Launched • Regional Market Analysis Done • Mapping out of Domestication of the Regional Kava Development Strategy (RKDS) in PNG • Development of PIP submission for Domestication of RKDS for this year. Technical support seeking through APEP (formerly PHAMA PLUS), and EU. EU through PIFS has responded with an initial funding of 10,000 Euro (still yet to receive)
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding – to fully implement the Domestication of road map of Regional Kava Development Strategy, we need funding so this year will be used to seek both funding and technical support • Technical Support – both scientific and bureaucratic

Activity 3.10. GINGER

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-Going
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply Chain Analysis • NTO will replicate the work on Vanilla to Ginger to develop the Ginger Industry in PNG. That is to produce the Ginger Export Guide and develop the Ginger Standard.
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Trial of Raw & Organic Ginger exported to Australia. The Export Assessment Report will be use as the basis going forward.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of access to affordable finance for investment and working capital to expend the production base • Non-conformance issues related to bio-security, standards and accreditation to meet international best practices to excess international market.

Activity 3.11. INVESTOR - DEGAGE GROUP

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in progress
Program Brief:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three (3) sets of Domestic Maritime Sector Market Analysis done • PNG Investment incentives and processes done and presented to Degage Group • 2x times in-person meeting with Degage Group in Vanuatu on the margins of Regional Kava Workshop to negotiate and deliberate on initial investment proposal • Currently working on facilitating investment visit by Degage Group Executive, is a Work in progress collaboration with key agencies (IPA,NMSA,DoT,PNG Ports)
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefs/Report Produced • Visitation of Degage Shipping vessel at Motukea International Port in November 2024 • Successful negotiation to build a downstream processing plant in PNG for cocoa, vanilla and kava into pharmaceutical and nutraceutical by products for niche EU markets. This is phase 2 investment and phase 1 domestic coasting shipping service.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited collaboration from NMSA • Access to data and data harmonization was a big delay in processing a quality reflective domestic market analysis for investment. Multiple data silo restrictive access to data. NTO host no data.

4. MARKET ACCESS & TRADE AGREEMENTS DIVISION

❖ 2024: A Year in Review for the MATA Division

The year 2024 has been exceptionally hectic for the MATA Division. We successfully implemented a large government project with outcomes set to go before the National Executive Council (NEC). In addition, we have been tirelessly working on the implementation of our Key Result Areas (KRAs) as agreed upon with the Chief Trade Officer (CTO). Alongside these, we have continued implementing our ongoing bilateral, regional trade negotiation coordination, and trade promotion work programs.

The Division coordinated the implementation of the first feasibility study undertaken by the National Trade Office (NTO), with a total budget of K3 million, consisting of grant funding and PNG Government counterpart funding. The PNG-China Joint Feasibility Study is a comprehensive and significant project that covers many aspects of international trade. A dedicated team of consultants worked throughout the year to execute the study's four phases. This landmark project has set a foundation for national consultations, establishing mechanisms that will underpin feasibility studies for future trade negotiations with partner countries.

The PNG Osaka Secretariat is also under the purview of the MATA Division. Our Division works collaboratively with other Divisions, sharing both Secretariat roles and related responsibilities. This reflects an inclusive, whole-of-NTO approach aimed at embedding and institutionalizing this function within the organization. Officers from the MATA Division have been assigned to the PNG Osaka Secretariat, undertaking various roles and assisting with different aspects of the overall coordination efforts to ensure PNG's successful participation in the World Expo 2025

Apart from the two priority projects mentioned above, the Division has also actively attended and represented PNG at bilateral and regional meetings, as well as various trade promotional activities. A detailed summary of these activities is outlined below in the table of achievements for 2024.

This year has not been without its challenges. Both internal and external pressures have impacted the timely delivery of priority projects, KRAs, and ongoing divisional work programs. We aim to work closely with NTO management and the Corporate Services Division to address these issues, including filling vacant positions within the Division.

With two branches, Trade Agreements & Market Access and Trade Promotions, dealing with different yet complementary work programs, a lot was achieved despite the lack of manpower, technical staff and office space. The division staff were resourceful and worked hard to ensure that all the work programs and activities captured below were successfully delivered with a few to be further progressed into the new year.

At the heart of advancing Papua New Guinea's economic landscape, the Market Access and Trade Agreements Division plays a pivotal role in shaping the nation's global trade endeavors

❑ **The main function of the Market Access and Trade Agreements Division is to:**

- Identify and assess most rewarding markets;
- Negotiate/review/update trade agreements on behalf of Government of Papua New Guinea;
- Contribute to domestication of trade agreements;
- Implement bilateral, regional and multilateral trade agreements;
- Encouraging integration of domestic businesses in global value chains by promoting greater value addition, export diversification, offshore investment and partnerships;
- Organize and disseminate trade information – policy, rules, agreements and trade development programs and coordinate and participate in Trade Promotion and Exhibitions.

❑ **These functions are delivered by the two branches in the Division;**

1. Trade Agreements Branch and
2. Market Access and Trade Promotions Branch.

❑ **OBJECTIVES FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD**

The Division's 2024 Work Programs for both the Trade Agreements Branch and the Market Access and Trade Promotions Branch are centered on three key focus areas:

- **Regional Integration** – Strengthening Papua New Guinea's participation in regional trade frameworks and initiatives to enhance economic cooperation and access to regional markets.
- **Trade Agreement Domestication** – Implementing international trade agreements into national policies, laws, and frameworks to ensure compliance and maximize benefits for Papua New Guinea.
- **Advocacy and Awareness** – Promoting understanding and awareness of trade agreements, market opportunities, and the benefits of international trade among stakeholders, including government agencies, businesses, and the general public.

ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

Summarized below are the activities that were implemented in 2024

Activity/Program 4. MARKET ACCESS AND TRADE AGREEMENTS DIVISION

4.1. Osaka 2025 World Expo

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
Program Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established the PNG Osaka Expo Secretariat within the National Trade Office and appointed Ambassador Gabriel Dusava as Commissioner General. Secured NEC approval for K3 million additional funding and facilitated participation contracts and submissions. Conducted regional consultations in East New Britain, East Sepik, and Eastern Highlands Provinces for Expo preparations. Represented PNG at international meetings, including the 3rd and final International Participants Meeting in Osaka. Coordinated private sector engagement through inter-agency meetings and consultations with peak industry bodies. Launched the Osaka Expo website and awarded contracts for media content creation and promotion. Completed Pavilion design, logistics planning, and all required applications for PNG's participation. Maintained regular communication with PNG's Embassy in Tokyo, Osaka Country Manager, and Expo stakeholders. Collected and promoted PNG products, arts, crafts, and cultural items for exhibition. Provided ongoing updates and reports to key stakeholders, including government officials and the Ministry.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall coordination of PNG's participation Liaise between the host & National Expo Secretariat Manage Section PNG Osaka Expo Pavilion NEC Appointed Amb. Gabriel Dusava to lead PNG's participation Update on the progress of the construction of the pavilion and presentation by host on all the requirements for participation PNG became official participant From experience in previous expo participation Outcome of the report lead to drafting of NEC Submission
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of Funding Delay in the Appointment of Commissioner Gene real

4.2. 7th China International Importers Expo

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content for 3 documents is finalized. Currently awaiting graphics before released by end of 2024.
Program Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CIIE is a trade fair that aims to strengthen economic and trade cooperation between countries and regions around the world. It also serves as a platform for multinational corporations to collaborate and form local partnerships.: Among other things, the CIIE is a showcase of China's opening-up, including the removal of foreign investment restrictions on the manufacturing sector.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAPT Branch coordinates PNG's participation in Trade Expo's and products displayed were centered around agricultural products: cocoa, QueenEmma Chocolate, coffee, and coconut products for body and beauty.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal constraints to effectively contribute to the bilateral process and lack of sectoral involvement in the development of strategic plans.

4.3. Japan Export Guide, Economic Assessment & Factsheet

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content for 3 documents is finalized. Currently awaiting graphics before released by end of this year 2024.
Program Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Background documents on exporting in to Japan and assessment of key areas for PNG businesses with a fact sheet with key information.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uploaded on the PNG Osaka 2025 website to raise awareness on key sectors and provide background information to interest exporters.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays in Finalizing Graphics Ensuring Timely Access and Engagement: ensuring that exporters actively engage with the content and make use of the provided information Effective promotion and dissemination of these resources,

4.4. Melanesian Free Trade Agreement

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Review of Trade in Services Schedule of Commitments ongoing.
Program Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PNG to sign and ratify the MFTA following review of Trade in Services Schedule of Commitments
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministerial Submission to NEC on the ratification of the MFTA.
Challenges	

4.5. Reaffirming PNG in the Pacific (PICTA Reconsideration)

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal consultations completed with input from relevant agencies received. Pending Ministerial Endorsement/Directive on NEC Submission before conveying of CoO specimen signatures and acceptance of amendments of PICTA legal text.
Program Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaffirmation of PNG in the Pacific through full implementation of PICTA through the identification of PICTA's outstanding implementation issues with way forward.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PNG to fulfil its outstanding obligations and operationalize trading under PICTA. This will enhance regional integration and facilitate the movement of goods between the parties.
Challenges	

4.6. PNG China JFS

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four Phase project: Phase One- Inception Phase completed. 2 inception meetings successfully held Phase Two- Consultation Phase Over 100 consultative meeting and various site facilitated, 3 sector study visits and 1 SPS field mission under taken. Phase 3- Validation Workshop and Phase 4- Finalization pending.
Program Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination and implementation of PNG JFS project. This project is the outcome of an MOU on a possible FTA between PNG & China that was signed in 2016. This project is jointly funded by a K1 million grant from the Government of the PRC and K2 million co- funding by the Government of PNG. This project involves 7 international consultants and 2 local ones and covers a very wide range of issues that are usually covered in FTAs including new and emerging issues. PNG China JFS was managed by Director who oversaw: Project budget and request for drawdown of funds for procurement of assets, travel, accommodation, per diems, hire of project staff and all related arrangements for the successful completion of project.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence based NEC Submission for consideration on the Way Forward. Creation of wide and inclusive consultative mechanism for feasibility studies for possible free trade agreement negotiations with bilateral partners. Broad study with key sectors and industries consulted.
Challenges	

4.7. AUS PNG BTA Way Forward

Status:	• Memo and Submission awaiting clearance.
Program Brief	• Finalization of the Bilateral Trade Assessment Report and presentation of the Outcomes to NEC.
Outcome	• Implementation of Way Forward.
Challenges	

4.8. Osaka Policy Deliverables

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one consultations in progress. • Pending inputs/comments from sector lead agencies on deliverable matrix. • Matrix to be finalized and submitted by end of December.
Program Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, Policy • Coordination for PNG's Participation in Osaka 2025. Coordination of policy brief and matrix of deliverables with inputs from key sectoral agencies.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Deliverables for PNG's Participation in Osaka 2025 as a guide for agencies to ensure that a whole of government approach is utilized to manage and guide participation and contribute to the attainment of the 2030 SDGs. • Policy Deliverables matrix will also be used to measure success of PNG's participation in the Osaka Expo 2025.
Challenges	• Preparations have been underway; however, due to Competing priorities and funding issues the meeting date have not been confirmed yet.

4.9. EU- PACPS TCM

Status:	• Successfully attended the 9th TCM Feb 2024. Worked on the outcomes of the 9TH TCM on outstanding issues and finalized for the next TCM. Policy and Logistics preparations under way for the 10th TCM Feb 2025.
Program Brief	• Committee established under Art. 69 of the IEPA to discuss the implementation of the EU -Pacific IEPA and related issues under PRISE.
Outcome	• Implementation of IEPA, collaboration between customs, enhanced trade dialogue on trade policy issues, market access, trade facilitation, and new and emerging issues.
Challenges	

4.10. UK FCOD Visit

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event successfully convened and participants gained valuable insight into post-harvest and fermentation processes.
Program Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coco Workshop held in Honiara, Solomon Islands over 2 days and focused on cocoa-post harvest practices and cocoa climate smart agriculture and fermentation process and provides an opportunity for discussion with UK buyers on market requirements and sourcing.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing cocoa exports to the UK Increasing PNG's participation in regional cocoa events. From the workshop one cocoa producer and Cocoa Board Officer have been invited to Chocoa 2025, the large cocoa and chocolate trade fair in Amsterdam in February 2025
Challenges	

4.11. UK TPP Cocoa Workshop

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful consultations facilitated. Identified PNG's export ready businesses, meeting UK market standards, increasing PNG exports to UK and identifying investment opportunities for UK businesses.
Program Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation on the UK-Pacific EPA to boost bilateral trade and improve EPA operations
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created links with coffee exporters and CIC that saw their successful participation in June 2024 under the UKTP scheme that arranged for five coffee producers and CIC representative to participate in a market tour to Hamburg, Germany, and meet with potential buyers from among coffee traders and roasters. Following the market tour, the companies attended World of Coffee in Copenhagen, Denmark, which is now the largest coffee related trade show in Europe.
Challenges	

3.12. Regional Investment Seminar

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful coordination of PNG's participation through IPA and Water PNG at Senior Level. Pending updates from invited agencies.
Program Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-day seminar covering 2 regional projects implemented by the Government of Japan including awareness on new business matching website launched by PIC Tokyo.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliberation on investment opportunities. Establishment of partnerships with Japanese Investors. Promotion of PNG investment opportunities in different sectors.
Challenges	

4.13. Regional Labor Mobility Principal Workshop

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful coordination of PNG's participation at the Workshop through DLIR and DCDC
Program Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-day technical consultative workshop to develop the regional labor mobility principles following FTOM 2023
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing PNG's participation and contributions to regional initiatives/programs.
Challenges	

4.14. Trade Facilitation Committee Meeting

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed. PNG through the MATA Division with Trade Facilitation Branch and key stakeholder attended the first MSGTFCM.
Program Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MSG TFCM replaces the MSG Customs and Quarantine Sub-Committee Meeting. This Forum addresses development and Challenges with respect to implementing the MSG Trade Agreements in goods and enhancing the implementation of other non-tariff trade facilitative measures.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting outcomes to be conveyed and reported to trade officials during MSG Trade and Economic Officials Meeting (TEOM).
Challenges	

4.15. Trade and Investment Working Group

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing The Commonwealth Trade and Investment Working Group is currently finalizing its Work Plan to be presented during the Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting 2025.
Program Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Working Group on Trade and Investment aims to increase investment with commonwealth members, with a work plan as its main framework to achieve 5 strategic objectives
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting outcomes to be conveyed to Minister for International Trade and Investment. PNG represented in the meeting and will take ownership of the outcome.
Challenges	

4.16. CHOGM

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed
Program Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CHOGM took place in Samoa with the theme "One Resilient Common Future: Transforming our Commonwealth".
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministerial Briefs drafted for Minister's perusal to made guided interventions.
Challenges	

4.17. Sub Group on Investment

Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • The Sub-action group since its establishment has hosted 6 meetings with regards to its Commonwealth Investment Action Plan. During CHOGM 2024, the sub-action group launched its investment action plan.
Program Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon Endorsement by the Commonwealth Trade Minister Meeting, June 2023. The sub action group was established to support the Working Group on Trade and Investment.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting outcomes and updates to be conveyed to the Minister. • PNG represented in the meeting and will take ownership of the outcome.
Challenges	

Challenges

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Political Support & Decisiveness • Lack of regional commitment to progress regional trade related issues. • Lack of interest/support from key stakeholders in priority government projects.
Briefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings that should be coordinated by the NTO face political interference. • Constant deferral Of regional meetings. • Many work programs depend on inputs from and consultation with key state holders. Conflicting priorities sometimes has an impact on the ability of the division to complete work programs in a timely manner.
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PNG continues to defer meetings that should have already taken place. • Lack of progress on regional issues especially those that PNG has an interest in. • Delay in timely delivery of work programs.
Proposed Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CTO to write to Minister and inform of Division Programs that should be attended at the Senior Officials Level • NTO to write to DFA to have Kundu Suva and Honiara aware of constant deferral and engage with the regional and sub-regional bodies to appeal to membership allow for meetings to be convened. • Increase public profile of NTO and engagement with other key agencies to build trust and networking with officers in key departments/ agencies

□ CONCLUSION

The year 2024 has been a period of progress and learning for the National Trade Office (NTO) as it continues to solidify its role as a key institution driving Papua New Guinea's trade and economic ambitions. Significant strides were made in capacity building, system modernization, and international representation, including preparations for the Osaka World Expo 2025.

Despite challenges such as manpower shortages, delayed implementation of key systems, and resource constraints, the dedication of the NTO team has ensured the successful execution of several critical initiatives, including public service inductions, enhanced financial reporting, and active collaboration with stakeholders.

The office's commitment to addressing operational challenges and investing in its workforce underscores its readiness to transition into 2025 with renewed focus and determination. By strengthening internal processes, prioritizing recruitment, and enhancing professional development opportunities, the NTO is well-positioned to achieve its strategic goals and contribute meaningfully to Papua New Guinea's trade development and international relations.

➤ **Remarks for 2024 Going into 2025**

As we close the chapter on 2024, we reflect on a year that demonstrated our resilience and capacity to overcome obstacles. Our achievements, such as the procurement of essential assets, the successful coordination of national and international engagements, and the emphasis on workforce development, are a testament to our collective effort and vision.

Looking ahead to 2025, we enter a year filled with opportunities to further Papua New Guinea's global presence and economic development. The Osaka World Expo 2025 will serve as a platform to showcase our rich cultural heritage and trade potential to the world.

To maximize this opportunity, we must strengthen our systems, complete the implementation of the IFMS and Alseco Payroll System, and continue to build a skilled and motivated team.

Let us carry the lessons of 2024 into the new year and remain steadfast in our commitment to empowering lives, promoting sustainable development, and fostering international partnerships. Together, we will pave the way for a stronger, more prosperous Papua New Guinea.

