



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



## UNODC IN THE PACIFIC

January - July 2022 Newsletter

# UNODC & PINA partner to build capacity of anti-corruption media

(Suva, Fiji) A new project on “Building the Capacity of Pacific Media to Report on Anti-Corruption” was launched in Fiji in May by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA).

The project, implemented by PINA through the Pacific Anti-Corruption Journalists Network (PACJN), aims to strengthen selected national media and journalists' capacity to report on the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), accountability, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-16) integrity issues.

“This new partnership will support Pacific journalists to better report on anti-

-corruption issues in the region and be more aware of key policies we need to advocate for, such as Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation. We have already initiated our first action under this project last week, during the International World Press Freedom Day when we conducted a FOI training to help journalists identify entry points to utilize FOI,” noted Makereta Komai, Managing Editor of PINA, pictured above right.

PINA has appointed experienced Solomon Islands journalist and media advocate, Ms. Georgina Kekea, as the PACJN Coordinator to implement a range of training activities and administer a grant scheme for anti-corruption journalists.

“We recognize that the media situation in each of our Pacific countries is different and we want to partner with our very strong national media associations to make sure we meet the integrity training needs of our diverse journalists in the region,” said Ms. Kekea.

Representing UNODC at the launch, Pacific Anti-Corruption Adviser, Ms. Marie Pegie Cauchois,



(above left) also presented new IT equipment to PINA.

“Through COVID-19, we realized that journalists in the Pacific had become more reliant on modern equipment to conduct research and online collaboration, so an important element of this new PACJN partnership is to provide such equipment that helps in undertaking quicker investigations and safer audio-visual storage,” said Ms. Cauchois.

## Solomons journalist wins award for investigations

In January 2022, Solomon Islands journalist and PACJN member Eremae Ofani (pictured far right) published a significant investigation into logging and corruption. In June 2022, he received the Media Association of Solomon Islands (MASI) Investigative Journalist Award 2022 for his work on a number of investigations. This investigative article was funded as one of the four PACJN UN-Pacific Regional Anti Corruption Programme (UN-PRAC) 2021 grants. PACJN and UNODC are preparing now to advertise the six new available grants to be offered in the second half of 2022. Eremae's corruption story can be found at: <https://theislandsun.com.sb/isabel-landowners-fight-for-ownership-over-tubi-logs/>





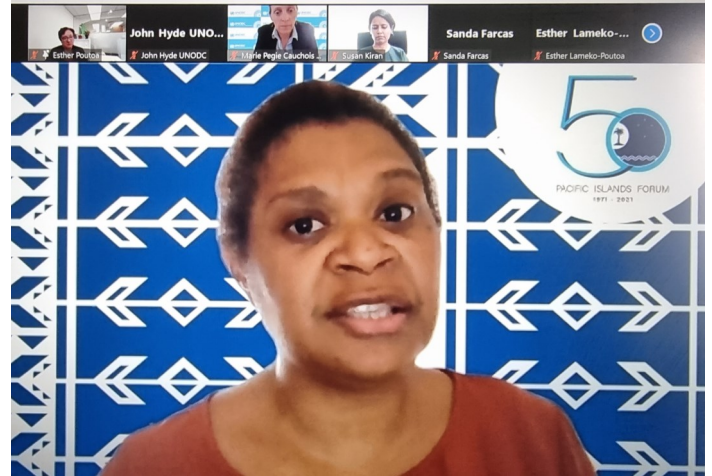
## Gender focus needed for corruption reform

Public integrity practices are key to help create an environment where not only corruption risks are identified and mitigated but also to ensure the effectiveness of policies aimed at improving gender equality.

As part of a webinar series on Corruption and Gender, UNODC presented one-hour webinar titled, “Corruption and Gender—Public Integrity Practices”, to explore priority issues.

UNODC’s first webinar on 5 April looked at the role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and media, and convened journalists and CSOs from around the Pacific. Highlighting and understanding the role of CSOs and media in exposing corruption and its gender aspect, promoting oversight and identifying the enablers and obstacles to their work is key to creating a “healthy” civic space.

The panel comprised of the Fiji Sun Investigative Editor, Ms Ivamere Nataro; the President of the Kiribati Association of Non-Government Organizations (KANGO), Ms Tereao Teingiiaspoke; Palau journalist, Ms Bernadette Carreon, who undertakes investigations with the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), and is a PACJN leader; Fijian integrity advocate, Ms Grace Konrote, youth coordinator for the Youth for Integrity Network within Civic Leaders for Clean Transactions -CLCT Integrity / Transparency Fiji; and Mrs. Marie Pegie Cauchois. The discussions touched upon the risks of nepotism and sexual exploitation, the need to raise awareness



of rights, the pathways to lessening corruption in helping development, the pervasive impact of culture in Kiribati society on women, and the pipeline of how such culture puts women at greater risk of corruption and emphasizes the need for greater education in generating equality.

UNODC’s second webinar on gender and corruption which focused on public integrity practices on 17 May attracted 76 participants, including from Tokelau. Speakers included the Chief Executive of the Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI), Mrs. Esther Lameko-Poutoa; the Permanent Secretary for Ministry of Civil Service in Fiji, Mrs. Susan Kiran; and a leading researcher on gender based violence in the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, Dr. Fiona Hukula (pictured above) who shared their experiences of how public integrity practices are key to help create an environment where not only corruption risks are identified and mitigated but also to ensure the effectiveness of policies aimed at improving gender equality.

## Fiji Ministry, youth lead on ethical procurement processes



A workshop on Creating Value in Procurement in Fiji drew many local stakeholders to Suva in February.

Public servants in Fiji involved in procurement processes undertook a training session on creating value in procurement, with assistance from UNODC, on 17 February.

Convened by the Procurement Office, Fiji Ministry of Economy, the “Creating Value in Procurement: A Look at below \$50,000 Procurement” sought to provide participants from various ministries with an overview of the strategic procurement process.

The training explored roles, key activities and methods used to drive value from the procurement process especially during COVID-19.

In addition, the workshop targeted the strengthening of compliance and transparency in public procurement below \$50,000, understanding the supply market and risks, and an overview of procurement regulations and guidelines.

Mrs. Marie-Laure Pegie Cauchois presented on UNODC Anti-Corruption Strategies in Public Procurements. The Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) addressed the impact of poor procurement ethics, while local youth NGO, CLCT Integrity / Transparency Fiji, partnered in the facilitation of the workshop with the Ministry of Economy.

UNODC in the Pacific have also produced an “Information Note on Corruption Risks in Public Procurement in the Context of COVID-19”, in collaboration with UNDP through the UN-PRAC Project:

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/southeastasiaandpacific//pacific/2021/UN-PRAC Brief - Corruption Risks in Public Procurement in the Context of COVID-19 in Pacific Island Countries.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/southeastasiaandpacific//pacific/2021/UN-PRAC%20Brief%20-%20Corruption%20Risks%20in%20Public%20Procurement%20in%20the%20Context%20of%20COVID-19%20in%20Pacific%20Island%20Countries.pdf)





# New strategy aims to reduce corruption in Cook Islands



A strategy on how the Cook Islands Government should change its approach to tackling corruption is awaiting final sign-off, the Cook Islands News reported on 23 June.

The Anti-Corruption Committee, a multi-agency committee featuring members from several Government departments, is in the process of finalizing its National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS).

The Anti-Corruption Committee Chairman Garth Henderson, (at right, photo courtesy of Cook Islands Tourism) said the NACS would likely address:

- Adequacy of anti-corruption legislation, policies and procedures, whether or not updating is required;
- Adequacy of enforcement efforts and capacity and training of personnel involved in anti-corruption measures;

- Participation of additional key stakeholders in anti-corruption measures (e.g., representation from community groups / private sector); and
- Promotion of anti-corruption awareness raising and information dissemination.

“This is something we are giving much thought to,” said Mr Henderson, who is also the country’s Financial Secretary.

“General public familiarity with anti-corruption legislation and reporting mechanisms is one challenge.”

Meanwhile at a March virtual regional discussion with UNODC Regional Representative, Mr Jeremy Douglas, and Executive Director of the UNODC, Ms Ghada Waly, Mr Carl Hunter, Cook Islands Public Service Commissioner said: “With the strong support of UNODC, our Prime Minister and other Pacific Leaders in 2020 adopted the Teieniwa Vision as a commitment to Pacific unity against corruption.”

“To give effect to our commitments made through the Teieniwa Vision, our Government has been working to strengthen key national institutions. It is also working closely with the UNODC Office in Suva to obtain support for the formulation of the Cook Islands’ first anti-corruption strategy. We thank UNODC’s Suva Office for its strong support in this initiative,” said Mr Hunter.

## Integrity capacity of Palau private sector boosted

A new partnership to increase integrity in the private sector in Palau has just started between the Palau Chamber of Commerce (PCOC) and UNODC.

The project builds on previous activities delivered by UNODC and PCOC to strengthen the capacity of women entrepreneurs and young people to create businesses that thrive with robust integrity measures. This new project will enable Palau business operators to better identify practices that will make doing business in the country easier while promoting more transparency.

Palau Chamber President Mr. Sam Scott, pictured center at right with other committee members, said that as Palau businesses move back into more open borders for trade and tourism, there is a need to ensure that business practices remain fit for purpose.

“The COVID lockdowns and supply chain interruptions heightened the need for better use of technology and equipment, so we are pleased that this new project enables the Chamber to secure appropriate equipment and technologies to deliver the best services we can to our membership while also proactively developing policies and concrete programmes to address corruption internally and within our members’ supply chains,” said Mr. Scott.

The new project is anchored in the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and the Teieniwa Vision, the anti-corruption roadmap adopted by 18 Pacific Island Forum Leaders, including Palau.

“The Palau Chamber has proved adept at working with the Government, media and civil society to advocate for the private sector. The integrity activities within this new project recognize that fighting corruption is a whole-of-community undertaking,” said Mrs. Marie Pegie Cauchois.

Other activities, planned during the remainder of 2022 include shaping advice and solutions that could be incorporated to address ease of doing business issues, building the capacity of the Women Entrepreneurs’ Group within the Palau Chamber, and producing a toolkit to enable Palau Young Entrepreneurs to engage on good governance and promote proactive disclosure.





# Tonga Police tap into training in maritime crime investigation

The Global Maritime Crime Programme of UNODC delivered training on Maritime Crime Investigation for Tonga Police. The specialized training programme focused on topics such as maritime jurisdiction, maritime crime scene management, vessel ownership and registration history, and evidence exploitation from maritime devices which are specific to maritime crime investigation.

The certificate award ceremony was conducted in June 2022 with the participation of the new Police Commissioner of Tonga and senior officers of the Tonga Police.



## New Fiji Commissioner joins provincial colleagues

The Global Maritime Crime Programme of UNODC delivered training on Maritime Crime Investigation for Fiji Police. The training was delivered to Police investigators from all provinces of Fiji. The specialized training programme focused on topics such as maritime jurisdiction, maritime crime scene management, vessel ownership and registration history, and evidence exploitation from maritime devices which are specific to maritime crime investigation. The certificate award

ceremony was conducted in June 2022 with the participation of the new Police Commissioner of Fiji and senior officers of the Fiji Police.

# Village headman gather to boost Lau Province awareness

Village headman from the Lau Province convened in Suva from 8-9 June for the Village Headman Training.

This training facilitates information collection from coastal communities on suspicious maritime activity and provides a structured communication channel to share information with maritime law enforcement authorities.

The Acting Permanent Secretary of Defence, National Security and policing attended the opening ceremony. UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) conducted the training in partnership with the Ministry of Defence, Fiji Police Force, Fiji Maritime Search and Rescue Coordination Centre, Immigration Fiji, Fiji Revenue and Customs Services, Biosecurity Authority of Fiji, Ministry of Fisheries and the i-Taukei Affairs Board.



## UNODC strengthens surveillance capability in North Pacific to protect marine resources

UNODC will join partners in the North Pacific supporting the acceleration of SDG achievement through digital transformation, to strengthen maritime surveillance capability to protect marine resources and counter illicit activity at sea. The smart island concept will see the installation of terrestrial the Automatic Identification System (AIS) to assist the respective island state in tracking vessels entering their waters and routing this information to the country maritime surveillance centre.

This expands the reach of the maritime law enforcement agencies given the Pacific's vast ocean space versus its manpower to police its waters. This digital connectivity will also link with all national operations on the smart island to be identified by the country while at the same time creating awareness in local communities on the importance of installing a terrestrial AIS station as it assists the country in policing their waters from all forms of maritime threats. UNODC's technical support will be expanded to Nauru, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia. The project is for a period of 24 months commencing on 1 July 2022.





## Investigative capacities against wildlife and forest crime aided for Pacific countries

The UNODC Environment Team, through its Global Programme on Crimes that Affect the Environment, is supporting four Pacific countries to strengthen their investigative capacities against wildlife and forest crime.

Rapid Assessments of the Criminal Justice Response to Wildlife and Forest Crime have been conducted in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, with funding from the U.S. State Department International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Section (INL).

The Environment Team has begun with National Consultative Workshops to present the findings of the Rapid Assessments to government officials with investigative and enforcement roles in wildlife and forest crime.

In Honiara, Solomon Islands, the UNODC and Environment and Conservation Division, under the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology held the first National Consultative Workshop on May 19 (pictured below). In his opening remarks, Director, Mr. Joe Horokou, encouraged all agencies present, as custodians of their natural environment, to do their duty to combat the illegal exploitation and trade in wildlife and timber. He recommended strengthening the capacity and cooperation of agencies and ensuring that rele-

vant laws and regulations were aligned and consistent.

The rapid assessment found that the lack of data on the scale and incidence of wildlife and forestry crime tends to mean that the criminal justice response is reactive rather than proactive. The assessment also pointed out that the current low pecuniary penalties have minimal deterrent effects on the multi-million-dollar businesses linked to wildlife and forest crime. It was recommended to establish a multi-agency taskforce to ensure regular information and intelligence exchange across the key authorities in the Solomon Islands, and to address deficiencies in legal frameworks.

Media link: [week asia pacific \(unodc.org\)](https://www.unodc.org/week-asia-pacific)

In Suva, Fiji, the UNODC and Fiji Ministry of Environment conducted the National Consultative Workshop in Fiji on 26 May (pictured above). The Director of the Environment Department, Ms. Sandeep Singh opened the workshop with an overview of international and domestic laws which mandated the Department of Environment with the responsibility of safeguarding Fiji's environment. "Protecting our endemic wildlife species has always been an issue that we value, and we appreciate the technical support from the UNODC to assist us to improve our protection against the illegal trade of wildlife."

Fiji partners recommended UNODC technical support for capacity building/ training opportunities, developing a Rapid Reference Guide, and undertaking an Indicator Framework and Corruption-Risk Assessments. They prioritized establishing a multi-agency taskforce, addressing gaps in legal frameworks, strengthening evidence, intelligence gathering and prosecutions, formalizing an intelligence sharing mechanisms, and strengthening data collection. Media link: [Wildlife trafficking now an organized crime – FBC News](https://www.fbcnews.com/fiji/news/wildlife-trafficking-now-an-organized-crime)





# UNODC seeks 2022 attitudes on reporting corruption



The police and anti-corruption agencies need information to prosecute and deter corrupt activity. Citizens can provide a vital role in supplying this information, so why don't more people come forward to report corruption?

From the fear of retaliation to logistical challenges, lack of awareness in the systems and the protections available, UNODC wants to understand the issues which are preventing people from making reports. The aim is for UNODC to use this data to support authorities and organizations to develop and improve effective reporting mechanisms and protections which are gender sensitive and gender responsive in nature.

UNODC conducted the research in Kiribati, Palau, Cook Islands and Vanuatu during April and May, which is now being collated and analyzed. Three surveys were developed and aimed at authorities receiving corruption reports, service users and other stakeholders with experiences of engaging with persons reporting corruption.

**Survey for persons in authorities receiving reports from whistleblowers :** This was sent to Prosecutors, Ombudsmen,

police, and so forth. This survey asked for information on what reporting systems are available, information on trends in reporting, the protections available and the barriers to reporting. The survey contains perception and experience-based questions.

**Survey for service users:** This survey asked members of the public questions on whether they would report acts of corruption, what factors would prevent them from making reports and their knowledge of the protection and reporting mechanisms available. The survey contains perception-based questions only and participants are not requested to provide their name or contact information.

**Survey for other stakeholders:** This was aimed at other stakeholders who do not work in authorities who receive corruption reports, but have valuable expertise of working with persons who report corruption, including members of the judiciary, chambers of commerce, civil society and the media.

## World Press Freedom Day tackles FOI



To coincide with World Press Freedom Day on 3 May 2022, PACJN hosted a Hybrid Media Training on "Media Role in Freedom of Information (FOI)".

The focus of this discussion was from the experience in Solomon Islands, where UNCAC review recommendations include strengthening access to information and the further implementation of the NACS.

The local Media Association of Solomon Islands and Transparency International Solomon Islands participated along with Solomons and regional journalists.





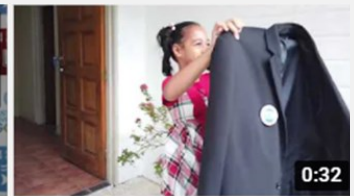


## Pacific videos are now online @UNODC

<https://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/pacific/videos.html>



Youth as Game Changers



"I don't accept bribes"



Corruption risk in Climate Change



A Pacific story on corruption and human rights



A collective effort to build a corruption free Pacific



Corruption Risks in Pacific Health



Corruption hurts young people. Kiribati Public Service Office.

## New anti-corruption toolkits on youth and gender launched

An upgraded "Pacific Youth Anti-Corruption Toolkit: Integrity in Action" was launched in June 2022, and a new information note on "Breaking the Silence on Gender and Corruption in the Pacific" was launched to mark International Women's Day (8 March) by UN-PRAC.

The youth toolkit is the result of a partnership between UN-PRAC and Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC). This updated Toolkit builds on UN-PRAC and APTC's work with young people since 2015 and is designed to help youth with their advocacy against corruption.

It recognizes that youth creativity and energy, as advocates for integrity, transparency, and accountability, are paramount to addressing corruption. The youth's ability to connect with peers in ways that were previously unimaginable, such as through innovation and technology, gives youth a power to drive positive change in the anti-corruption arena. The Pacific Youth Forum Against Corruption (PYFAC), a network of youth anti-corruption advocates from 14 countries in the region, has been working with UN-PRAC since 2015 on developing toolkits and trainings.

Pervasive gender inequality remains a barrier to progress, justice and social stability across the Pacific Island countries, including as a barrier to achieving integrity.

"This Breaking the Silence on Gender and Corruption in the Pacific information note seeks to highlight the challenges and opportunities to progress gender equity in anti-corruption in the Pacific, in line with international best practice found in the UNCAC and SDG-16," said Mrs. Marie Pegie Cauchois.

Both the new youth toolkit and gender information note can be viewed at: [UNODC Pacific Islands Publications](#)

## UN-PRAC publications

### Information Notes:

- Holistic Integrity Frameworks to Address Corruption
- Economic and Social Impacts of Corruption in the Pacific
- Public Service Excellence to Prevent Corruption
- Status of the Right to Information in the Pacific Island Countries
- Civil Society Engagement to Address Corruption
- Action taken by Pacific Legislatures to Address Corruption

### Papers:

- Holistic Integrity Frameworks to Address Corruption
- Status of the Right to Information in the Pacific Island Countries
- The Role of Non-State Actors and Citizens in Corruption Prevention in the Pacific

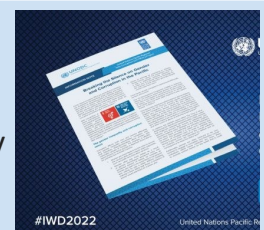
### Factsheets on UNCAC:

- UNCAC (An Overview)
- UNCAC Chapter II: Preventative Measures
- UNCAC Chapter III: Criminalization and Law Enforcement
- UNCAC Chapter IV: International Cooperation
- UNCAC Chapter V: Asset Recovery

### Other publications:

- Briefing Note: Public Service Excellence to Prevent Corruption
- Advisory Note: COVID-19 and Corruption in the Pacific
- UN-PRAC's Submission to the Australian Parliament's Inquiry into strengthening Australia's relationships with countries in the Pacific Region
- UN-PRAC's Submission to the Australian Parliament's Inquiry into Australia activating greater trade and investment with Pacific Island Countries & Inquiry into the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for Australia's foreign affairs, defence and trade
- Anti-Corruption Toolkits for Women-Owned Micro, Small and Medium Businesses in Fiji & Palau

Please contact the UNODC team listed overleaf to get a copy of these documents or visit <https://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/pacific/resources.html>



#IWD2022

United Nations Pacific Region



## UNODC regional team working together



UNODC's team in the regional Fiji office has grown to four full-time members during 2022. Pictured at left is Mrs. Savita Chand, UNODC Programme Assistant, Mrs. Marie-Laure Pegie Cauchois, UNODC Regional Anti-Corruption Adviser and UNODC Officer In Charge - Pacific, Mr. Kalusiani Vuki, National Programme Officer- Maritime Crime under the Global Maritime Crime Programme of UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, and Mrs. Marie Jane Fatiaki, Social Affairs Officer, Research Officer, Human Trafficking Migrant Smuggling, Crime Research Section & Programme Officer, Global Program for combatting Wildlife and Forest Crime of UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

## First FICAC Commissioner appointed in Fiji

Mr. Rashmi Aslam was appointed as the Commissioner of the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption on 22 April.

Mr Aslam (pictured at far right with UNODC representatives) is the first Commissioner since the establishment of the organization in 2007. He was previously a Senior Prosecutor, Manager Legal and Acting Deputy Commissioner before his appointment as Deputy Commissioner on the 1 May 2020.



### UN Convention against Corruption in the Pacific

Pacific States parties to UNCAC	Date of ratification/accession
Cook Islands	17 October 2011
Federated States of Micronesia	21 March 2012
Fiji	14 May 2008
Kingdom of Tonga	6 February 2020
Kiribati	27 September 2013
Nauru	12 July 2012
Niue	3 November 2017
Palau	24 March 2009
Papua New Guinea	16 July 2007
Republic of the Marshall Islands	17 November 2011
Samoa	18 April 2018
Solomon Islands	6 January 2012
Tuvalu	4 September
Vanuatu	12 July 2011

### UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in the Pacific

Pacific States parties to UNTOC	Ratification, Acceptance, Approval, Accession, Succession
Cook Islands	4 Mar 2004
Federated States of Micronesia	24 May 2004
Fiji	19 Sep 2017
Kingdom of Tonga	3 Oct 2014
Kiribati	15 Sep 2005
Nauru	12 Jul 2012 (signed 12 Nov 2001)
Niue	16 Jul 2012
Palau	13 May 2019
Papua New Guinea	
Republic of the Marshall Islands	15 Jun 2011
Samoa	17 Dec 2014
Solomon Islands	
Tuvalu	
Vanuatu	4 Jan 2006

## New interns for the Pacific & PNG



UNODC's partnership with Washington and Lee University School of Law in the U.S. sees another two interns join the Pacific work of UNODC.

Ms. Anika Maan arrived in Suva, Fiji on 16 May 2022 as an anti-corruption intern, to work on regional activities. Anika is working on her law degree from W&L Law. She brings experience from the U.S. Department of Justice and currently conducts research to better immigration policies in the U.S.

Ms. Julia Farbstein began on 23 May 2022 as an anti-corruption intern, with the UNODC Papua New Guinea team. Julia a legal Intern and just finished her first year of law school at W&L Law.

Julia is a certified yoga teacher and completed her undergraduate studies at Oberlin College in the Conservatory studying opera.



## For more information, please contact:

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The United Nations Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption (UN-PRAC) Project is a joint initiative of UNODC and UNDP, supported by the New Zealand Government.



The Papua New Guinea Anti-Corruption Project



Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) - Australia Anti-Corruption Project