

THE ENHANCED PACIFIC MARKET ACCESS PARTNERSHIP: A MID-TERM REVIEW

6 June 2024
Final Report

Garth Atkinson, Bob Macfarlane,
Dr Elisabeth Poppelwell, and
Kirsty Burnett

About Future Partners and the Team

Future Partners Limited is a Wellington-based consultancy firm, owned and managed by Kirsty Burnett. Future Partners has extensive international experience in designing activities, implementing, monitoring and reviewing development assistance, and providing institutional capacity building for public sector and economic reform programs primarily in Asia and the Pacific. Future Partners is a client focussed organisation and values its reputation and modus operandi. It sees its primary clients as the people and organisations who will be impacted by their interventions. To respond to specific Terms of References (ToR) we assemble teams from amongst our associates, individuals and organisations we sub-contract.

Kirsty Burnett has over 30 years of experience as an international development practitioner, she worked for the United Nations prior to joining MFAT in 2005. Since 2013, Kirsty has worked as an independent consultant, primarily in the Pacific, for a range of clients and is based in Wellington.

Dr Elisabeth Poppelwell has over 20 years of experience in applied social science research and evaluation. Since 2014, Elisabeth has largely focused on researching and evaluating international development and country programmes in the Pacific as an independent consultant.

Garth Atkinson has more than 40 years' experience in agriculture value chain development in 26 countries throughout the Pacific, Asia, Africa and Australasia. He has worked extensively with development partners in the Pacific Region, as well as extensive biosecurity and market access experience through projects he has worked on in Central and South Asia and in Southeast Asia.

Bob Macfarlane has over 50 years' experience in entomology, plant protection and biosecurity, primarily in the Pacific region. He was Chief Entomologist in Solomon Islands for seven years, Plant Protection Officer for the Pacific Community (SPC) for seven years, and worked for 10 years with Biosecurity New Zealand where he negotiated access for exports of New Zealand fresh produce.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this Report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the New Zealand Government, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, or any other relevant party. Nor do these entities accept any liability for claims arising from the Report's content.

Table of Contents

Key Acronyms	1
Executive Summary.....	2
1 Introduction, Purpose and Objectives	8
1.1 Introduction	8
1.2 MTR purpose	8
1.3 MTR objectives	9
1.4 MTR scope	10
2 Background	11
2.1 Context	11
2.2 Programme objectives	11
3 Key Review Questions and Design Approach	15
3.1 Key review questions	15
3.2 MTR design approach	15
4 Findings.....	18
4.1 Coherence and Relevance	18
4.2 Effectiveness and Impact	29
4.3 Efficiency and Sustainability	40
5 Lessons, Conclusions and Recommendations	43
5.1 Coherence and Relevance	43
5.2 Effectiveness and Impact	45
5.3 Efficiency and Sustainability	47
Appendices.....	49
Appendix A. EPMAP Programme Logic diagram	50
Appendix B. Methodology and analytic framework.....	51
Appendix C. Relevant source documents.....	55
Appendix D. Organisations consulted	57
Appendix E. Information sheet and consent form	58

Key Acronyms

BA	Biosecurity Australia
BAF	Biosecurity Authority Fiji
BNZ	Biosecurity New Zealand
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Australia
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia
EPBP	Enhanced Pacific Biosecurity Programme
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMD	Foot and mouth disease
HTFA	High Temperature Forced Air
IDC	International Development Cooperation
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
KRQs	Key Review Questions
MERL	Monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning
MTR	Mid-term review
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand
MPI	Ministry for Primary Industries
NZD	New Zealand dollars
NPPO	National Plant Protection Organisations
OECD DAC	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
PACER Plus	Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations, expanded programme
PCE	Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation
PHAMA Plus	Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Plus Program
PHEL	Plant Health and Environment Laboratory, MPI, New Zealand
PHOVAPS	Pacific Heads of Veterinary and Animal Production Services
PICs	Pacific Island countries
PPPO	Pacific Plant Protection Organization
PTI	Pacific Trade Invest
RMD	Remote Microscopy Diagnostic system
SPC	The Pacific Community, formerly the Secretariat for the Pacific Community and prior to that the South Pacific Commission
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
ToR	Terms of Reference
WOAH	World Organisation for Animal Health

Executive Summary

The Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership Programme (phase 2)

The Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership (EPMAP) programme has been designed to take a holistic approach and to address common problems across the Pacific Island countries (PICs) that currently export horticulture produce and focuses on building partner capacity so that fresh produce exports meet New Zealand’s import health standards. Effective biosecurity systems play a crucial role in enabling a level of system integrity to facilitate trade for PICs.

The EPMAP Programme has been built on the work MFAT has been doing with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) since 2013 via the Pacific Biosecurity Programme phase 1, and under an inception phase for EPMAP Programme that ran prior to implementation of the current phase. The EPMAP Programme design phase and implementation period is from July 2022 to June 2026. Its budget is NZD 6,396,460 from 31 January 2023 to 30 September 2026. Funding is from Vote Foreign Affairs for International Development Cooperation (IDC).

Purpose of the mid-term review

The mid-term review (MTR) provides an independent analysis that will be used by MFAT to assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, impact, and sustainability of the EPBP programme, and to identify recommendations for the remaining period of the programme.

The report is based on the following key review questions (KRQs):

KRQ1	To what extent does the EPBP programme remain a priority for partner countries and New Zealand’s International Development Cooperation Programme (IDCP)?
KRQ2	What progress has been made to the EPBP programme’s outputs, and short and medium-term outcomes?
KRQ3	How efficiently is the EPBP programme using its resources?

Review approach

Seventy-four stakeholders participated in the MTR from 13 February to 10 March 2024. In-country visits were undertaken in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Tonga, and Vanuatu. Samoa is preparing for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and requested that interviews be undertaken remotely. These interviews and a document review were used to answer the key review questions (KRQ).

This MTR was undertaken in conjunction with the Enhanced Pacific Biosecurity Partnership (EPBP) programme. The rationale for a joint MTR was largely focused on reducing interview fatigue for stakeholders, who are mostly the same for both programmes, and financial efficiencies for the client. The timeframe and available data for these reviews lent itself to a rapid review approach.

Key findings

The EPMAP Programme is a priority for partner countries and for New Zealand's International Aid Programme through their commitment to improving the economic wellbeing of rural people, and it is aligned to MPI's mandate to protect New Zealand's food sector through reducing the threat of biologically damaging incursions. It is taking a risk-based approach, with a strong focus on supporting partner countries to maintain existing market access pathways and address any areas of non-compliance.

Its training activities are relevant to reducing New Zealand's Biosecurity import risks which are helping PICs maintain their export pathways from PICs to New Zealand to remain open and maintained. The Programme is supporting Pacific biosecurity agencies to maintain export assurances for fresh produce exports to New Zealand.

There are examples where the outputs achieved are of high quality, cost-effective and timely, and where the programme has had positive impact on some working practices. However, the Monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning (MERL) Framework has not been effectively operationalised or resourced, including the annual country joint reviews that were envisaged to identify key changes and improvements in capacity.

There are deficiencies in the governance and operational structure of the programme that impact on implementation, and the programme financial management in some areas constrain timely delivery of inputs. The EPMAP Programme activities are not sufficiently advanced to assess if there has been good value for investment and effort. Adjustments will be needed to build capacity and capability to ensure that these activities endure in the PICs beyond the timeframe of the Programme.

Below is a summary of the key findings that answer the KRQs for the EPMAP Programme MTR:

Coherence and Relevance

1. **Partner countries.** The EPMAP Programme is a priority particularly for Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu through improving the economic wellbeing of rural people, and through sustaining income from exports of targeted fresh produce. EPMAP is important to Samoa,¹ and the Cook Islands remain interested. Both countries have stated that they do not wish to be excluded but have more pressing priorities in the short-term.
2. **New Zealand's IDC.** The EPMAP Programme is a priority for New Zealand's International Aid Programme through its commitment to improving the economic wellbeing of rural people. New Zealand is committed to EPMAP Programme under Goal Three of the Pacific Regional Four-Year Development Plan²: A region where all countries enable equitable and inclusive economic, social and environmental well-being for all community members, consistent with human rights.
3. **MPI.** The EPMAP Programme is aligned to the mandate of MPI to protect New Zealand's food sector through reducing the threat of biologically damaging incursions.

¹ For Samoa the programme is important, but they don't have the staff with the appropriate skills to make best use of the training and want to postpone the training until such a time as they do. See quote #040 below in section 4.1.1.

² <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Aid/4YPs-2021-24/Pacific-Regional-4YP.pdf>.

4. The EPMAP Programme is aligned to the programmes of relevant multilateral stakeholders, both regional and international.
5. The EPMAP Programme training activities are relevant to reducing New Zealand's Biosecurity risks:
 - Import Risks. New Zealand Biosecurity risks related to incursions of harmful incursions are reduced.
 - PIC Exports. Export pathways of fresh produce from PICs to New Zealand are opened and maintained.

Effectiveness and Impact

1. EPMAP Programme is supporting Pacific biosecurity agencies to maintain export assurances for fresh produce to New Zealand and is somewhat supported by the biosecurity related activities of other agencies in the region.
2. There are examples where the outputs achieved are of high quality, cost effective and timely such as opening the pathway for Tahitian Limes to New Zealand.
3. There are examples where EPMAP Programme has had positive impact on some working practices such as enhanced understanding of market access pathway procedures.
4. The MERL Framework does not appear to have been effectively operationalised and resourced, particularly annual joint country reviews of progress.
5. There are deficiencies in the governance and operational structure of EPMAP Programme that impact on implementation.
6. EPMAP Programme financial management constrains the timely delivery of inputs in some areas, for example, MPI staff travel.

Efficiency and Sustainability

1. EPMAP Programme activities are not sufficiently advanced to assess if there has been good value for investment and effort.
2. Adjustments are needed to build capacity and capability to ensure that these activities will endure in the PICs beyond the timeframe of the Programme.

Lessons learned

Coherence and Relevance

- It is important to monitor the level of commitment and the resources that PIC governments can commit to the Programme.
- Taking a risks-based approach to understanding the potential threat of biologically damaging organisms on New Zealand continues to underpin the relevance of the Programme.
- At the country level there is a lack of clarity around the roles of other agencies, and this constrains harmonisation and synergies between activities.
- The current New Zealand Government economy drive may affect the implementation of EPBP. The Governance Group will need to discuss the impact of the MPI restructuring on delivery of the EPBP and agree on what changes will be required to the Programme. Once these have been agreed between the two

agencies, they will need to communicate these changes to EPBP staff and participating countries where appropriate.

Effectiveness and Impact

- It is understood the MPI needs to work to global Import Health Standards, however it is difficult to apply rigid standard procedures for the New Zealand context to the capacity limitation context in the Pacific.³
- The current approach to training relies on in-house ability and capacity within MPI. It has been suggested that it would be helpful if SPC was able to conduct generic Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) training with more PIC stakeholders and to other countries. While it's not in the mandate of this Programme to provide training to SPC, there is interest by them in this being considered. SPC would need to be resourced accordingly.
- Effective programme management requires an understanding of the Pacific context and the flexibility to adapt the training approach, for example, develop in-house expertise and consideration of train the trainer approaches in a formal way.
- The lack of clarity around the roles of different agencies is causing confusion at the national level.
- The social, political, and economic environment of PICs is evolving, and it is timely to re-examine relevance of upcoming activities before they are acted on.
- The MERL Framework could be an effective management tool provided it is fully operationalised and resourced.
- Programme strategies will continue to evolve and should guide adjustments to operational activities.

Efficiency and Sustainability

- Having meetings themed on specific issues with agencies and partners has been very helpful in understanding the challenges and issues and aligning work activities.
- Delivery of activities needs to be based on a timetable for each PIC.

Recommendations

Coherence and Relevance

1. Annual meetings are conducted between senior MFAT and MPI staff with the heads of relevant PIC ministries to validate their ongoing commitment to develop export pathways for fresh produce and to identify the resources available.
2. Although value-added processing lies outside MPI's mandate and other development assistance provides support, further consideration should be given to developing value-added processing as an alternative to fresh produce pathway exporting horticulture products and/or improving the linkages with other programmes such as PHAMA Plus.

³ For example, to recognise the need for sufficient time for PIC compliance, but the Review team did not ask detailed questions or form a view.

3. Senior MPI and MFAT staff reaffirm Programme goals and objectives and the level of resourcing needed for each country.
4. The engagement process with stakeholders to develop country work plans is improved to ensure that full buy-in and commitment to their contributions have been taken on board.
5. Noting that MPI's contribution towards ePhyto ends in December 2024, a scoping exercise needs to be undertaken to determine cost-effective systems for ensuring the smallholders can be incorporated into an ePhyto system.

Effectiveness and Impact

1. Import Health Standards are reviewed with the objective of adapting them to the PIC context where possible and without compromising their purpose.
2. To re-examine the Programme management approach⁴ to identify any changes that may be needed to improve effectiveness for the remaining period of the Programme.
3. Programme Management works with other regional agencies to improve the national level of understanding of roles and responsibilities to strengthening market access pathways.
4. The Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) system reports be reviewed to factor in contextual relevance and then used as the basis for determining ongoing capacity development work.
5. The MERL Framework is operationalised (including undertaking annual, joint country reviews) through greater resourcing to determine if the outcomes, outputs, and activities remain relevant and revised where needed.
6. Essential data for the MERL Framework is identified and surveys are conducted to collect information.
7. A user-friendly database for the MERL Framework is established and maintained.
8. It is timely to refresh the ToR, so that the membership of the MPI/MFAT Governance Group and the scope of its mandate are discussed and agreed by this Group.
9. The Governance Group agenda format for meetings is reviewed to ensure that provision is made for the identification and development of strategies both within and outside the programme that are needed to ensure that market access pathways remain viable.
10. Priority is given to facilitate the formation and operation of PIC governance groups, and membership could include private sector representation.

Efficiency and Sustainability

1. The work plan for activities be updated in consultation with PIC agencies every quarter.
2. All staff travel be considered and approved by the Governance Group as part of its approval of each year's annual work-plan. This approach should not prevent

⁴ For example, use of a documented in-country workshop that inform the annual workplans.

MPI from carrying out its processes which ensure value for money and accountability for expenditure.

3. A 'train the trainer' approach is adopted that will enable the National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) training to become sustainable and extend the reach to more PICs. It would reduce the demands of capacity for each agency and would be a significant step towards sustainability. It is acknowledged, however, that the benefits of additional training in New Zealand are highly regarded by PIC stakeholders.
4. A review of all training programmes, whoever the delivery partner should be, is undertaken to ensure there are no overlaps, and that synergies can be enhanced.

1 Introduction, Purpose and Objectives

1.1 Introduction

Future Partners was contracted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) to undertake a joint mid-term review (MTR) of the Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership (EPMAP) and the Enhanced Pacific Biosecurity Partnership (EPBP) programmes.

The implementing partner for both programmes is the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MFAT for each programme. The funding for these programmes is from Vote Foreign Affairs for International Development Cooperation (IDC).

The rationale for a joint MTR was largely focused on reducing interview fatigue for stakeholders, who are mostly the same for both programmes, and financial efficiencies for the client. The timeframe and available data for these reviews lent itself to a rapid review approach.

This report is for the MTR of the EPMAP Programme.

A statement of work (SoW) for this MTR was signed on 30 January 2024 and the interviews were undertaken from 13 February to 8 March 2024. More detail on this phase and other evidence gathered for the MTR is in Section 3. Overall, 74 stakeholders were consulted either in person or via video conference.

The report starts with the purpose and objectives for the MTR, as outlined in the Review's terms of reference (ToR) and scope. Section 2 provides a brief contextual overview of factors that will have informed EPMAP, the programme's objectives, its outputs, and outcomes. Section 3 outlines the review's key review questions (KRQs) and the MTR design approach. Section 4 focuses on the Findings, and Section 5 discusses Lessons and Recommendations. A copy of EPMAP's MERL Framework is in Appendix A.

1.2 MTR purpose

As outlined in the ToR the MTR provides an independent analysis that will be used by MFAT to:

- Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, impact, and sustainability⁵ of the EPMAP Programme.
- Identify recommendations for the remaining period of the programme.

⁵ The OECD DAC evaluation criteria (coherence, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability) provides a framework to determine the merit and worth of the project and serves as the basis on which evaluative judgements are made.

1.3 MTR objectives

The objectives are based on the MTR programme ToR and are the basis for the key review questions and sub-questions.

Objective 1. To assess the extent to which the programme remains a priority for partner countries and NZ's International Development Cooperation Programme (IDCP).

- Are the intended outcomes of the programme still relevant?
- Is the programme focused on the right areas with the right partners?
- How well does the programme fit with other activities implemented in the following context:
 - within MPI
 - between NZ agencies, including Crown Research Institutes (CRIs)
 - within the context of the NZ and Australia relationship and government departments
 - within the context of the relevant multilateral agencies, both regional and international?
- What is the level of interest in, and commitment to, the programme from the key stakeholders?

Objective 2. To examine the progress being made in achieving the outputs and outcomes of the programme.

- To what extent has the EPMAP Programme supported Pacific biosecurity agencies to maintain export assurances for fresh produce exports to New Zealand? Have outputs been of high quality and to cost and time?
- To what extent have the programme's MERL systems been operationalised?
- Is the governance and operational structure of the programme effectively supporting implementation and ensuring transparency and collaboration, while reducing overlaps and inefficiencies?
- Is the programme management and financial management fit-for-purpose?

Objective 3. To review the value of the programme.

- Has the programme achieved good value for the investment and effort?
- How is sustainability (e.g. of capability and capacity building) for the programme being considered?

Objective 4. Lessons learned for improvement – to identify the key learnings to increase positive impact in the future.

- What do we need to start, stop, continue, or change during the remainder of the programme?

1.4 MTR scope

The MTR scope involves:

- Time period being reviewed – the design phase and implementation period is July 2022–June 2026.
- Geographic focus – Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu. In-country visits included Cook Islands, Fiji, Tonga, and Vanuatu.
- Stakeholder engagement – included MPI and MFAT officials, programme governance group members, in-country and regional partners.

Outside of the review scope

- Phase 1 of the programme.

2 Background

2.1 Context

In all five of the programme countries, agriculture is primarily a semi-subsistence activity. That is, most families plant crops for their own consumption with any excess being given to relatives and friends or going to the local fresh produce market (except perhaps around major urban areas). Up to 70 percent of Pacific peoples depend on agriculture, fisheries or associated activities for their livelihoods.⁶ In all countries only a relatively small number of families are commercial growers with production going primarily to the domestic market or to an even smaller extent to the export market. Currently Fiji accounts for almost 80 percent of the horticulture products imported from PICs to New Zealand with the majority of the remainder coming from Tonga. Despite this all the countries have for many years (30+) aspired to grow the fresh produce export sector and this desire is recorded in all government plans for the agriculture sector.⁷

A major constraint to this trade has been the difficulties that stakeholders in PICs have in meeting the quarantine regulations at the New Zealand border which have been put in place to protect New Zealand's horticulture industry. Deficiencies within existing biosecurity systems has led to infestations of pests and diseases and has prevented PICs from trading with international markets and a lack of confidence in PIC fresh produce supply chains.

Key challenges to existing biosecurity export assurance systems include inconsistencies in the operation and management of biosecurity systems, lack of capacity to maintain existing systems, inadequate infrastructure for core functions, limited coordination across value chain actors and reliance on external stakeholders to address issues within the phytosanitary system.⁸

New Zealand Biosecurity has had a long association with PIC biosecurity agencies through significant efforts to remedy deficiencies in assurance schemes, however these activities have usually been on a country-by-country basis and designed to address one part of the problem.

2.2 Programme objectives

The EPMAP Programme has been designed to take a holistic approach and to address common problems across the PICs that currently export horticulture produce and focuses on building partner capacity so that fresh produce exports meet NZ's import health standards. Effective biosecurity systems play a crucial role in enabling a level of system integrity to facilitate trade for PICs. The EPMAP Programme has been built on the work MFAT has been doing with MPI since 2013 via the Pacific Biosecurity Programme phase 1, and on an inception phase for EPMAP Programme that ran prior to implementation of

⁶ Remarks by FAO Sub-Regional Coordinator for the Pacific, Xiangjun Yao, at the Opening of the Seventh Regional Meeting of Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services, Apia, 25 August 2021.

⁷ *Hazelman, M. and Pilon, B.* The Importance of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables in the Pacific Region, p.15, in: Allwood, A.J. and Drew, R.A.I. 1997. Management of Fruit Flies in the Pacific: A regional symposium, Nadi, Fiji 28-31 October 1996. ACIAR Proceedings No. 76. p. 267.

⁸ Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership: Detailed Business Case, MFAT.

the current phase. An aspect to this programme has been maintaining existing market access pathways. Key developments during that phase included the establishment of an MPI Pacific horticulture imports team, work with Biosecurity Vanuatu (BV) to re-open the Tahitian limes pathway, and with Tonga’s Ministry of Agriculture, Foods and Forests (MAFF) to lift the suspension of the watermelon pathway. Other outputs from the inception phase included training on export assurance systems and plans, relationship building, strengthening cooperation with regional organisations, and desk-based research (EPMAP Programme Business Case, p.3).

As noted in the programme’s Business Case, the focus for EPMAP Programme is on building capacity in the National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPO) to develop, improve, and implement export assurance systems that meet NZ’s Import Health Standards (IHS) as it has a particular focus on facilitating Pacific exports to New Zealand. The rationale is that by building capacity to meet NZ’s requirements, the PICs are more likely to have the skills and systems to meet the requirements of other trading partners (p.7). The programme’s Activities are outlined in Table 1.

The EPMAP Programme design phase and implementation period is from July 2022 to June 2026. Its budget is NZD 6,396,460 for 31 January 2023 to 30 September 2026. Funding is from Vote from Foreign Affairs for International Development Cooperation (IDC).

Table 1 shows the five programme outputs outlined in the MTR ToR, and activities that are aligned to these outputs. The activities (sub-outputs) are from the Market Access Business Plan. Table 2 lists its outcomes based on the Programme’s MERL Framework.

Table 1. The Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership programme (phase 2) outputs and activities

Outputs	Activities
<p>1. Establish a holistic system to facilitate the development, management, monitoring, and evaluation of export systems including export plans.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborate with each country to establish a governance group, drafting team, audit team, technical team and new technical help online system. 2. For each country, finalise and transfer existing government to government bilateral quarantine agreements (BQA) to export plans. 3. Support the development of commodity-specific pathway and treatment Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). 4. Provide support and oversight to, e.g. PHAMA Plus and Pacific Trade Invest (PTI), to study the market for Pacific produce in New Zealand and then establish an effective ‘market watch system’. 5. Provide support and oversight to PTI to roll out the market–farm–market model in the supply chain for the commodity priorities for each country. 6. Support the NPPOs to develop capacity-building programmes. 7. Develop awareness and training reference materials for supply chain participants and collaborate to provide training.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Review of export systems from first half of year 4 and implement any recommendations for improvement. 9. Finalise prioritisation process for approved but not currently traded commodities. 10. Assist NPPOs to set-up annual trade and scientific forums.
2. Strengthen the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) and Phytosanitary Certification System (PCS). (No. 14 in the Programme's MERL Framework).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a plan to address existing gaps presented in the updated 2021/22 Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) report. 2. Initiate and support PPPO to update PCEs for other PICs and develop a regional PCE plan for the future.⁹ 3. Support the development and rolling out of an induction training and mentoring programme and toolkit specifically for heads of NPPOs. 4. Facilitate a bi-monthly 'Super 5' Leadership Mentoring programme between members of MPI and project countries NPPO Senior Leadership.
3. Establish a robust e-operational and geographic information system (GIS) database for export facilitation in Fiji and Tonga. (No. 16 in the Programme's MERL Framework).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present a gap analysis report which encompasses learnings from the scoping in the inception year. 2. Provide support to PPPO to select IT system developers for the development of the electronic systems. Collaborate with Pacific agencies and relevant technical consultants to build country specific systems for Fiji and Tonga. 3. Link in with ePhyto system.
4. Roll out of an electronic phytosanitary certificate (ePhyto) system in line with the Regional ePhyto Implementation Plan, 2020-2022. (No. 15 in the Programme's MERL Framework).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborate with SPC and PPPO to ensure the effective implementation of the ePhyto Regional Implementation Plan. 2. MPI to assist in facilitating the testing of the ePhyto system via country-to-country ePhyto transfer.
5. Part-fund the implementation of the Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO) annual work plans and core functions based on approved PPPO costed work plans. (No. 15 in the Programme's MERL Framework).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PPPO costed work plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish platforms to promote the work of the PPPO including the delivery of support online.¹⁰ • Led by PPPO, MPI will assist to conduct regional coordination workshops with all relevant regional agencies to, among other things, effectively partner and coordinate at the regional level.

⁹ The Review team has been advised that a 'developing a regional PCE plan' is no longer in scope.

¹⁰ The Review team has also been advised that 'delivery of online support' is also no longer in scope.

Table 2. The Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership programme (Phase 2) outcomes

Outcomes

- Systems comply with international frameworks and standards
 - Transparent, consistent, and effective plant export compliance systems in place
 - Priority export pathways identified and export plans developed
 - NZ Trust and confidence in PICs export assurance systems increased.
-

3 Key Review Questions and Design Approach

3.1 Key review questions

The Key Review Questions (KRQs) below align to MFAT’s objectives in Section 2 and the OECD DAC criteria that have been used as an assessment tool the EPMAP Programme.

KRQ1	To what extent does the programme remain a priority for partner countries and NZ’s International Development Cooperation Programme (IDCP)?	Coherence (How well does the intervention fit?) and Relevance (Is the intervention doing the right things?) Objective 1
KRQ2	What progress has been made to the programme’s outputs, and short and medium-term outcomes?	Effectiveness (Is the intervention achieving its objectives?) and Impact (What difference does the intervention make?) Objective 2
KRQ3	How efficiently is the programme using its resources?	Efficiency (How well are resources being used?) and Sustainability (Will benefits or interventions last?) Objective 3
	Lessons learned and recommendations for improvement (Objective 4)	<p>The lessons learned and recommendations’ section is based on findings from the KRQs and sub-questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key learnings to increase positive impact in the future? • What do we need to change (if anything) during the remaining phase of the programme?

3.2 MTR design approach

This section provides a brief overview of our approach. More detail of our methodology is in Appendix B where we outline our information collection method to answer the KRQs and sub-questions.

Our overall approach is participatory and utilisation-focused. This entailed working closely with MFAT to ensure the MTR provides findings and recommendations to support evidence-based decisions for the completion of the Programme.

Formative evaluation approach to this rapid review

We applied a formative evaluation methodology, as this is a learning and improvement tool aimed at improving, revising, or modifying an activity’s design to improve performance. The rationale for this is to allow the implementers to make adjustments as necessary before the initiative is completed. The MERL Framework has not been operationalised as intended (including the annual joint country reviews) and this meant the review focused on the responses from the 74 stakeholders we

interviewed and MPI/MFAT documents shared with the Review Team. The timeframe to complete the two reviews was tight and so required a rapid review approach.¹¹

3.2.1 Methods

Based on the lack of monitoring data, empirical information and data was collected and analysed using different qualitative methods, as outlined below. The purpose of this approach is to increase the reliability of data, the findings and recommendations, and improve our understanding of how outcomes are being achieved in the context the programme is being implemented in.¹² For validity, we mostly used two reviewers for each interview session to ensure notes are representative of responses given. In addition to the Review Team’s analytic workshop, the team also undertook an initial findings presentation workshop with the MTR Steering Group.¹³

Desk-based review of relevant documents and monitoring data

In the absence of monitoring data, the MTR used programme-related reporting documentation (Appendix C).

Semi-structured interviews

Interviews were undertaken from 13 February to 10 March 2024. In-country visits were undertaken in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Tonga, and Vanuatu. Samoa is preparing for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and requested that interviews be undertaken remotely. A list of organisations that participated in the interviews is in Appendix D. Table 3 shows the number (74) of key stakeholder interviews from 47 interview sessions.

Table 3. Number of stakeholders interviewed

Stakeholders	No. of interviews	Type of engagement
Cook Islands	6	visit 6-10 March
Fiji	18	visit 26 February-1 March
Samoa	6	videoconference
Tonga	13	Visit 4-8 March
Vanuatu	13	Visit 6-10 March
Other	18	in-person or via videoconference
Total	74	

¹¹ <https://libguides.jcu.edu.au/rapidreview>.

¹² Qualitative evaluations provide the ability to gain an in-depth understanding of a programme or process. It involves the “why” and the “how” and allows a deeper look at issues of interest and to explore nuances. Qualitative data can provide a more detailed, and more holistic understanding (in this case) of the programme being reviewed. It explores the perspectives and behaviours of the participants being interviewed, and documents being reviewed. Qualitative methods also help identify issues, and provide a basis for decision-making. <https://ppe.cw.wsu.edu/qualitative-evaluation/#:~:text=Qualitative%20evaluation%20provides%20you%20with,interest%20and%20to%20explore%20nuances>.

¹³ Comprising staff from MFAT’s Development Economy & Prosperity and Capability & Insights Divisions.

The Review Team used an interview guide based on the KRQs and sub-questions. This allowed the Team to ensure questions or topics were appropriate to the interviewee's role and knowledge of the programme. The Review Team worked closely with MFAT and MPI to identify a list of key stakeholders to be interviewed (either face-to-face or via video conferencing, as individuals or in groups). An introduction letter from MFAT was emailed in advance inviting stakeholders to participate in the independent MTR. Following these introductions, stakeholders were provided with an information sheet and a consent form (Appendix E) by Future Partners, either by email or in person.

Observations

Qualitative observation is the act of gathering information for research or evaluation. It depends heavily on researchers/evaluators gathering very specific data and report on characteristics in place of measurements. As part of the in-country visits, evaluators visited various sites including the Heat Treatment Forced Air (HTFA) facility in Nadi, and laboratories in Suva and Port Vila.

Analytical framework

Thematic analysis was used for data analysis, alongside the OECD DAC criteria (Appendix B). This was undertaken in Excel and reflected data collection techniques to answer the KRQs and sub-questions. Our approach ensured there was rigour through triangulation and that insights emerging from the data analysis were valid and credible. This approach allowed the reviewers to assess merit and to make evaluative judgements of the project to date.

Ethical considerations

Participation was voluntary and consent was provided either in writing or verbally before the interview commencing. Participants were briefed about being able to stop the interview at any time, and that they did not have to respond to any questions asked. Key informant stakeholders were told that responses would remain confidential to the Evaluation team, and they will not be identified in the report. Where we use a quotation to illustrate a finding, an identification number has been applied.

3.2.2 Limitations

Although this is a mid-term review, the implementation of the Programme has not progressed as far as had been envisaged at this mid-point. However, the main limitation to this MTR is the lack of application of the MERL Framework, and the resulting lack of monitoring data.

4 Findings

The Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership programme (phase 2)

To achieve the MTR objectives, the review focused on three KRQs. As discussed in Section 3.22, the review findings are based on in-depth interviews with 74 key stakeholders and a documentation review, and are analysed against the OECD DAC criteria (see Appendix B).

In Section 4, we present key findings by KRQs and sub-questions. Section 5 discusses Lessons and outlines Recommendations for the remainder of the programme based on these findings and lessons discussed.

4.1 Coherence and Relevance

KRQ1: To what extent does the programme remain a priority for partner countries and NZ's IDCP?

This question and sub-questions¹⁴ relate to Objective 1. It focuses on coherence (how well the programme fits with partner country priorities, and other development partners' interventions), and relevance (whether the programme's approach is doing 'the right things', and the extent to which its objectives and goals are meeting partner country priorities).

Box 4.1: KRQ1 Key Findings – Coherence and Relevance

Coherence

- **Partner Countries.** The EPMAP Programme is a priority particularly for Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu through improving the economic wellbeing of rural people, and through sustaining income from exports of targeted fresh produce. EPMAP is important to Samoa, and the Cook Islands remain interested. Both countries have stated that they do not wish to be excluded but have more pressing priorities in the short-term.
- **New Zealand IDC.** The EPMAP Programme is a priority for New Zealand's International Aid Programme through its commitment to improving the economic wellbeing of rural people. New Zealand is committed to the EPMAP Programme under Goal Three of the Pacific Regional Four-Year Development Plan: A region where all countries enable equitable and inclusive economic, social and environmental well-being for all community members, consistent with human rights.

¹⁴ The sub-questions for KRQ1 are: 1.1 Are the intended outcomes of the programme still relevant? 1.2 Is the programme focused on the right areas with the right partners? 1.3 How well does the programme fit with other activities implemented in the following context: within MPI; between NZ agencies, including Crown Research Institutes (CRIs); within the context of the NZ and Australia relationship and government departments; within the context of the relevant multilateral agencies, both regional and international?; and 1.4 What is the level of interest in, and commitment to, the programme from the key stakeholders?

-
- **MPI.** The EPMAP Programme is aligned to the mandate of MPI to protect New Zealand’s food sector through reducing the threat of biologically damaging incursions.
 - The EPMAP Programme is aligned to the programmes of relevant multilateral stakeholders, both regional and international.

Relevance

- The EPMAP Programme training activities are relevant to reducing New Zealand’s Biosecurity import risks:
 - Import Risks. New Zealand Biosecurity import risks are reduced.
 - PIC Exports. Export pathways from PICs to New Zealand are opened and maintained.

Coherence

4.1.1 EPMAP is a priority for partner countries through their commitment to improving the economic wellbeing of rural people, and through sustaining income from exports of target produce

The EPMAP Programme is a priority for partner countries, in particular for Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu. EPMAP is important to Samoa and the Cook Islands remain interested, and both countries stated that they do not wish to be excluded but have more pressing priorities in the short-term. EPMAP is a priority for New Zealand’s International Aid Programme through their commitment to improving the economic wellbeing of rural people, and it is aligned to MPI’s mandate to protect New Zealand’s food sector through reducing the threat of biologically damaging incursions. Its training activities are relevant to reducing New Zealand’s Biosecurity import risks which are helping PICs maintain their export pathways from PICs to New Zealand to remain open and maintained. The Programme is supporting Pacific biosecurity agencies to maintain export assurances for fresh produce exports to New Zealand. There are examples where the outputs achieved are of high quality, cost-effective and timely, and where the programme has had positive impact on some working practices. However, the Monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning (MERL) Framework have not been effectively operationalised, including the annual country joint reviews that were envisaged to identify key changes and improvements in capacity. There are deficiencies in the governance and operational structure of the programme that impact on implementation, and the programme financial management in some areas constrain timely delivery of inputs. The EPMAP Programme activities are not sufficiently advanced to assess if there has been good value for investment and effort. Adjustments will be needed to build capacity and capability to ensure that these activities endure in the PICs beyond the timeframe of the Programme.

Table 4. Export policies/plans for fresh produce by country

Country	Export policies/plans for fresh produce
Cook Islands	<p>Agricultural exports from the Cook Islands show a history of peaks and troughs by value and product. In the 1960s major exports were pineapples and oranges, in the 1970s it was copra, and in the 1980s it was bananas. With the establishment of the HTFA facility, papaya has become the main export. More recently noni¹⁵ juice has been the largest export product. There are also unrecorded small exports of value-added agricultural products such as virgin coconut oil, vanilla beans and extracts, and tamanu¹⁶ seed oil.</p> <p>While currently there are no exports of agriculture products, the Agriculture Sector Action Plan (2020–2025)¹⁷ includes outputs and activities that are specifically related to the development of exports.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand development. Confirm required export market parameters; authentication of farm gate to export market costs; promotion of domestic and export brands including the development of individual island brands. • Export market analysis and protocol development. Seasonal market price information; logistics, introductions to buyers in importing countries; building of clusters for commercial and small-scale growers; facilitating meeting the biosecurity requirements of importing country.
Fiji	<p>The Ministry of Agriculture 5 Year Development Plan¹⁸ recognises the market potential for growing Pacific Diaspora in Australia, New Zealand and the USA for fresh products and prioritised activities to capitalise on these markets, including undertaking market assessments to understand changing consumer preferences for key commodities and design interventions across value chains. The development of frameworks for contract farming, public-private partnerships, and the organisation of farmer clusters, in conjunction with the Fiji Crop and Livestock Council, will assist in ensuring that smallholder farmers are not left behind. In addition, the Ministry aims to engage at least 100 youths aged 20-30 years for intensive hands-on training over a three-year incubation period.</p> <p>The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF)¹⁹ is a public enterprise mandated to work collaboratively with government sectors, industry, community, regional and international bodies to actively assisting to grow existing and open new trade markets for Fiji’s agricultural exports whilst ensuring safe imports; providing advice to government and overseeing policy on</p>

¹⁵ Noni is the Indian Mulberry.

¹⁶ Tamanu is the Polynesian Mahogany.

¹⁷ <https://agriculture.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/FINAL-Agriculture-Sector-Action-Plan-2020-2025-ASAP-June-2020.pdf>.

¹⁸ Fiji Ministry of Agriculture 5 Year Strategic Development Plan 2019 – 2023 <https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/documents/SDP%20Booklet%20Final%202024.pdf>.

¹⁹ <https://www.baf.com.fj/>.

	<p>Biosecurity matters to minimise risk to the health of communities and plants.</p>
Samoa	<p>In January 2023 Samoa’s Cabinet approved the establishment of the Samoa Export Authority (SEA).²⁰ The establishment of the Authority is the Government’s response to farmers and local businesses drive to export their products. The Authority aims to make export access easier for local businesses to export their products by way of connecting with international markets, and that there are enough products for export. The Samoa Pathway for Development²¹ 2021-2026 supports improvements to the quality and quantity of exported goods and services through the SEA, including those associated with the agriculture sector. The Authority will also ensure that trade agreements, product standards and criteria for export between local exporters and the international markets are met.</p> <p>The Agriculture and Fisheries Sector Plan (AFSP) for 2022-2027 emphasises the importance of continuing to promote private sector-led agriculture growth – recognising that the private sector players (farmers, fishers, traders, processors, vendors, traders, retailers, exporters, etc.) are the major contributors to the development of the sector. Specifically, Sector Outcome 4, it prioritises the creation of an enabler for the private sector to improve the quality, value and competitiveness of agriculture and fisheries’ products for domestic and export markets.</p> <p>The Samoa Trade Sector and Manufacturing Sector Plan (TCM-SP)²² 2017-2021 has been an integral part of the Samoa Pathway for Development to support improvements to the quality and quantity of exported goods and services through the export authority programmes, including those associated with agriculture. Pillar 3 of the TCM-SP aims to enhance market access and visibility and competitiveness of Samoan goods and services in export markets. The pillar also focusses on improving the support services to businesses through improved trade facilitation measures at the border (e.g. quarantine services, customs services etc.), understanding markets, and export supply chains.</p> <p>The development objective of Samoa Agriculture and Fisheries Productivity and Marketing Project (SAFPROM)²³ for Samoa is to increase the productivity and access to markets for selected products. The Project recognises that are some products are produced which could also be developed into sustainable export commodities, including organic products for which there is recognised export potential.</p>
Tonga	<p>Commercial farming is one of the four priority areas of the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forests Corporate Plan.²⁴ The Policy and Planning Division conducts regular meetings with farmers and exports to raise</p>

²⁰ <https://islandsbusiness.com/news-break/cabinet-approves-establishment-of-samoa-export-authority/>.

²¹ <https://www.mof.gov.ws/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Pathway-for-the-Development-of-Samoa.pdf>.

²² <https://www.mof.gov.ws/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/TCMSP-201718-202021.pdf>.

²³ <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P165873>.

²⁴ http://mafff.we.bs/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Final-REVISED-MAFF-CP-2020_2021-2022_2023.pdf.

awareness of trade and marketing principals. The introduction of an ePhyto Certification System and improving market access through completing export pathways' protocols are integral programmes of the Quarantine and Quality Management Division.

With assistance from the UNDP the Export Packhouse will be repaired and upgraded equipment installed. Exporters will be trained in hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) certification, hygiene and safety as well as grading packing and labelling for export. Extension activities include TV and radio programmes aimed at encouraging production of a range of products for export.

The Ministry of Trade and Economic Development (MTED) has conducted market research studies in Australia and New Zealand to identify export market trends for current and potential products. MTED also conducts biennial meetings to identify challenges that exporters face.²⁵

The Export Supply Chain Division of the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development assists farmers to process and export their product to markets in New Zealand. The Division is currently working to establish a new export market for frozen root crops to start in the new financial year. The Division also provides financial support for freight of root crops and kava.

Vanuatu

The Vanuatu Agriculture Sector Policy (2015–2030) is aligned to the Vanuatu's Sustainable Millennium Development Goals (SMDG)²⁶ with respect to improving food security (SDG 1) and sustainable economic growth (SDG 8). Market access and export pathways is one of the 13 thematic areas of the policy which also notes that exports of crops including vanilla, kava, Tahitian limes, coconut products, cocoa and coffee will be promoted.

The current Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity Corporate Plan²⁷ covered the 2014–2018 period and remains relevant until succeeded by an updated plan. The Corporate Plan proposes establishing the Vanuatu National Marketing and Consumer Cooperative Federation with the aim of improving access to both export and domestic markets. The plan also focuses on improving market access through the following outputs; (i) conducting market surveys, (ii) financial analysis of prioritised crops, and (iii) strengthening farmer organisations.

The importance of market access for agriculture products is evidenced under the importance given to the sector through the European Union (EU) European Development Fund (EDF) 11 Programme which provides budget support for the development of beef, coconut, fruit, and vegetable value chains for both domestic and export markets. To ensure that international standards are met, the Vanuatu Bureau of Standards (VBS)²⁸ has been established to undertake SPS related testing on agriculture products for export markets.

²⁵ https://pmo.gov.to/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/MTED-Corporate-Plan-2020_21_English.pdf.

²⁶ <https://www.gov.vu/index.php/resources/vanuatu-2030>.

²⁷ <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC167039/>.

²⁸ <http://vila.volutions.vu/>.

PICs have initiatives that support the EPMAP. Examples include:

- Market research (Vanuatu)
- Scoping for produce treatments (Cook Islands)
- Trials to improve and establish viability of crops (Vanuatu, Fiji)
- Development of fruit fly baits (Fiji)
- Investments in centralised packhouses (Samoa, Tonga).

The following quotes from stakeholders that we interviewed illustrate the challenges country partners have for fresh produce exports, and how they could be overcome either through processing, focusing solely on the domestic market, or the tourism sector:

"Processing should be considered as a means to add value and by-pass biosecurity concerns. However, ... there would always be a market for fresh produce exports" (O70).

"The domestic and tourism markets for fresh vegetables are more attractive than trying to meet the stringent requirements of market access pathways" (O74).

"Without doubt Market Access is extremely important, it's highly valuable for the future development of Samoa. It's not about what's the next crop you want to export, but study the volume. Samoa has a large list of things it could take to NZ. Majority of it is under-utilised. So do we want to keep opening new doors?" (O40).

One outcome at this stage of the EPMAP Programme is that it has provided in-country stakeholders an opportunity to re-examine whether exports of fresh produce is an economically sustainable viable option for their country.

4.1.2 EPMAP Programme is a priority for New Zealand's International Aid Programme through its commitment to improving the economic wellbeing of rural people

New Zealand IDCP is committed to the programme under Goal Three of the Pacific Regional Four-Year Development Plan,²⁹ "A region where all countries enable equitable and inclusive economic, social and environmental well-being for all community members, consistent with human rights" (p.9).

Specific regional goals that the EPMAP Programme is aligned with include:

- An effective regional architecture supports the Pacific to collectively achieve regional objectives, optimise its influence globally and reinforce the international rules-based order.
- A region where all countries enable equitable and inclusive economic, social and environmental wellbeing for all community members, consistent with human rights.
- A strategic environment conducive to New Zealand's interests and values has been preserved, and influence as a preferred and trusted partner is safeguarded.

²⁹ <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Aid/4YPs-2021-24/Pacific-Regional-4YP.pdf>.

The proposed partnership also aligns with the following four-year plan (4YP) country strategic goals as outlined in Table 5 below.³⁰

Table 5. 4YP Partner country strategic goals

Country	4YP Strategic goals
Cook Islands	Support for a more diversified, resilient and sustainable Cook Islands economy provides prosperity, opportunity and improved social outcomes for all of its people. Support for the Cook Islands to remain well-governed with strong institutions able to respond effectively to climate change, health threats and other challenges, and provide equitably for the needs of its people.
Fiji	Partnership - A broader, deeper and resilient relationship. Economic Resilience - Economic growth is inclusive, resilient, and sustainable.
Samoa	Strengthen Samoa’s economic and environmental resilience.
Tonga	Deepen NZ partnership with Tonga on areas of shared importance, with a focus on people and well-being.
Vanuatu	Improving the effectiveness and inclusivity of the State. Increasing shared prosperity.

The Business Case for the EPMAP Programme is premised on the share of agriculture to export earnings for PICs, and the contribution of between three to thirty five percent of Pacific countries’ Gross Domestic Profit (GDP).³¹ The Business Case further states that PICs require robust biosecurity assurance systems in order to meet the biosecurity requirements of trading partners, so they can maintain existing exports and open-up new export opportunities. Deficiencies within existing biosecurity systems prevent PICs from trading their horticultural produce with international markets and has eroded the confidence of trading partners. At the same time, there are additional trade opportunities that could be explored through approval of a large number of commodity pathways into New Zealand that are currently not being utilised by PICs.

Key challenges identified in the Business Case include inconsistencies to existing biosecurity export assurance systems in the operation and management of biosecurity systems, lack of capacity to maintain existing systems, inadequate infrastructure for core functions, limited coordination across value chain actors and reliance on external stakeholders to address issues within the phytosanitary system.

³⁰ Business Case. PDG Detailed Business Case for the Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership Activity.

³¹https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS?end=2020&name_desc=true&start=1960&view=chart.

New Zealand's Pacific Regional Four-Year Plan also states that, "the programme builds upon the work MFAT has been doing with MPI since 2013 via the Pacific Biosecurity Programme (PBP), and builds on an inception phase that has been running for the last year."³²

Interviews with stakeholders also supported the reviewed documentation.

"The high-level objectives are relevant. There are huge risks with pests and diseases. [The programme] is aimed at improving trade opportunities by reducing barriers through improving PIC biosecurity systems.... Some countries are engaged and others less so. It can take time for in-country partners to understand the rationale for EPMAP. ... The Programme has political drivers and prioritised countries that New Zealand is already trading with [such as] 80 percent from Fiji of fresh produce" (028).

"The Programme has the potential to make a big impact on the livelihood of rural people in the target PICs ... it has been designed in response to partner country needs rather than dictating, but in hindsight it seems to be overly ambitious" (024).

The comment above relates to the importance of the Programme to PICs; and it also suggests that the Programme is possibly over-ambitious for the timeframe and human resources available.

4.1.3 The EPMAP Programme is aligned to MPI's mandate to protect New Zealand's food sector through reducing the treat of biologically damaging incursions

The Programme aims to reduce the biosecurity import risk to New Zealand through the achievement of three outcomes:

- ensuring that systems comply with international frameworks and standards
- establishment of consistent and effective plant export compliance systems, and
- the development of export pathways and plans.

MPI's strategy to reduce the risk of incursions involves applying strict management standards on imported produce. The Strategy intention refers to working with other agencies to educate producers, exporters, and importers to verify compliance by screening goods for pests and diseases at offshore quarantine and inspection facilities.

"They [EPMAP and EPBP Programmes] are important and high value programmes for biosecurity in supporting PICs' capability. It also benefits NZ/MPI and the whole region. New Zealand and Australia put the most effort into biosecurity for the region, and having biosecurity capability stronger across the Pacific also benefits Australia and New Zealand.... The programmes are an important part of MPI business and the priorities for biosecurity work they deliver" (027).

³² Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership: Business Case, MFAT.

Stakeholders see that if biosecurity is stronger across whole Pacific, and broader region, it benefits New Zealand and each of the countries involved.

4.1.4 EPMAP Programme is aligned to the programmes of relevant multilateral stakeholders, both regional and international

PACER Plus. The Agreement aims to increase trade throughout the region.³³ It has established a common set of trading rules for the region, making it easier for businesses to trade throughout the Pacific and further afield. An overview of the aim of Component 3 of the PACER Plus agreement (for SPS) is to help build the capacity of Quarantine and Biosecurity agencies responsible for the implementation of SPS policies and procedures. Relevant activities implemented under this Component include:

- ePhyto training in Vanuatu and Tonga, and
- a comprehensive training programme on fumigation treatment and accreditation scheme, aimed at strengthening the skills and knowledge of biosecurity and quarantine personnel in Vanuatu.

The below quote highlights some initial challenges, but that these have now been overcome.

"At the outset there was overlap with the export pathway work but now it's clear what PHAMA Plus is doing and the interface with PACER plus – this has been achieved by scheduling more coordination meetings and [through] better communication. ...There was also some overlap initially with DAFF but then [we] worked it out and so can see benefit of the programme, where to supplement and add value" (036).

PHAMA Plus. Its programme of work focuses on maintaining and improving existing market access by developing the capacity of the public and private sectors to meet the requirements of these markets, and on gaining access for novel agricultural-based products into new markets.³⁴ PHAMA also provides assistance in meeting export regulations, such as compliance with international food safety standards. In terms of new export products, PHAMA Plus can assist with market research and market development activities. Relevant activities include:

- gaining new markets for selected products
- accreditation for selected export facilities
- development of quality production and processing manuals
- animal or plant health surveys to support market access
- export feasibility for selected products to new destinations
- development of bio-security plans
- development of export pathway protocols for new products, and
- capacity building of public and private sector to gain, maintain and improve international market access.

"MPI's approach compliments the PHAMA Plus program. For example, the research to determine the number of pathways being accessed. ... The

³³ <https://pacerplus.org>.

³⁴ <https://phamaplus.com.au>.

programme has allowed MPI to extend collaboration and has clarified roles and opened the way for complementarity of programmes” (035).

DFAT and DAFF. The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) jointly fund a number of programmes that aim to:

“Protect our Australian agriculture and food systems, stop the regional spread of pests and diseases, maintain, and expand market access opportunities, support regional economic prosperity and food security, and safeguard our environment and our way of life.”³⁵

Relevant programmes include:

- Pacific trade and market access programme: Capacity building to understand import compliance (Australia)
- Generic ePhyto National System (GeNs): Training and implementation
- Pacific Export Pathway Operational Training
- Support for value-added products, and
- Sea Containers: Training for NPPOs.

Some stakeholders thought that the space in which Australia and New Zealand were operating in was becoming complicated over time as [EPMAP and EPBP] programmes have grown in scope and mandate. Although the focus of ePhyto is to improve efficiency, there is some confusion at a country level which is risking complications and duplication. They thought that more can be done to harmonise efforts through sharing of documentation such as work plans and reports.

Relevance

Relevance is assessed against whether programme activities will address systemic deficiencies identified in the PCEs in developing and maintaining market access pathways and achieve programme outcomes. EPMAP Programme aims to improve the capacity and competency of the NPPO to meet its core responsibilities listed in the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) convention.³⁶

4.1.5 The Programme training activities are relevant to reducing New Zealand’s Biosecurity import risks

Import risks. New Zealand Biosecurity import risks are reduced. Programme activities focus on the deficiencies identified in the PCE and common to all countries:

- inadequate technical capacity to mitigate biosecurity risks
- inadequate capacity to deal with exports/imports, and
- lack of awareness of the role of NPPO among stakeholders through activities aimed at increasing technical capacity to mitigate biosecurity risks, and increasing stakeholder awareness of the role of NPPO.

³⁵ National Biosecurity Strategy: <https://www.biosecurity.gov.au/about/national-biosecurity-committee/nbs>.

³⁶ Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation. Final Report: Fiji. No Date.

Activities include:

- delivery of training for NPPOs, growers, and exporters
- coaching and mentoring for NPPOs on export assurance, and
- development of on-line learning materials.

EPMAP Programme does not address other deficiencies that relate to lack of resources in PICs to cover inspections and updating of policies and procedures for NPPOs that have led to a lack of investment.

PIC exports. Export pathways from PICs to New Zealand are opened and maintained.

The Output 3 Scoping reports for Fiji and Tonga found that the PIC paper-based export system for exporting fresh produce to New Zealand has been in place since the early 1990s and that there were several issues that constrain opening new pathways and maintaining existing pathways.

At the administrative level issues with paper-based systems include:

- **MPI audits.** Changes to the paper-based system, such as non-compliance and updating information, need a complete re-write of the whole document.
- **Collaboration.** Paper-based systems make collaboration amongst the key parties extremely difficult and achieving efficiency throughout an export facilitation system is quite difficult, complicated, and slow.
- **Protection.** Hand-written records can be easily amended (lost, mishandled, or damaged) while digital data could be encrypted and safely kept in hard disks or electronic devices.
- **Storage space.** Countries are required to hold documentations for two years as agreed bilaterally for audit purposes making storage, archiving and retrieval time and space consuming.
- **Cost.** There are significant costs in paper-based systems associated with printers, toners and photocopiers and administration.

The approach taken by the EPMAP Programme in maintaining existing pathways is to:

- **Introduce ePhyto systems.** Benefits of this system include reducing the administrative costs associated with the high number of forms manually filled in and eliminating repetitive recoding of information. The ePhyto system also reduces the human error in transcription and recording and allows change to be tracked. Transmission of data will be instantaneous and treatment systems (Fiji) can also be incorporated.
- **E-operational and GIS data base systems.** Benefits of this system include a reduction in the number of forms to be filled in, tracking and management of the supply chain.

Successful adoption of this approach would assist in achieving the following outcomes:

- Transparency, consistency and effectiveness of export compliance systems in place, and
- New Zealand trust and confidence in PICs Export Assurance Systems increased.

In general, this is supported by stakeholders who believe that the ePhyto system would improve the market access pathway, but that adoption of the system will take time for some, in particular the small and informal market growers. Exporters we met could see the benefit of ePhyto.

"The ePhyto biosecurity system being promoted by Biosecurity New Zealand will be very helpful in reducing documentation and inputting errors but adoption will be slow. At the moment BAF are adopting the system and exporters are doing so slowly, but farmers are finding the change difficult. Farmers may not want to spend money on a Smart phone to use the App" (O32).

"Growers not always coping with paperwork required by MPI. Average age of growers is 55-60 years and not all are tech savvy" (O31).

"More training on e-phyto as manual phyto is very labour intensive for commercial exporters" (O87).

4.2 Effectiveness and Impact

KRQ2: What progress has been made to the programme's outputs, and short and medium-term outcomes?

This question and sub-questions³⁷ relate to Objective 2. It focuses on Effectiveness (Is the intervention achieving its objectives?) and Impact (What difference does the intervention make?).

Box 4.2: KRQ2 key findings - Effectiveness and Impact

Effectiveness

- The EPMAP Programme is supporting Pacific biosecurity agencies to maintain export assurances for fresh produce to New Zealand, and is somewhat supported by the biosecurity-related activities of other agencies in the region.
- There are examples where the outputs achieved are of high quality, cost effective and timely, such as opening the pathway for Tahitian Limes to New Zealand.

Impact

- There are examples where the Programme has had positive impact on some working practices, such as enhanced understanding of market access pathway procedures.

³⁷ The sub-questions for KRQ2 are: 2.1 To what extent has the EPMAP supported Pacific biosecurity agencies to maintain export assurances for fresh produce exports to New Zealand? Have outputs been of high quality and to cost and time? 2.2 To what extent have the programme's MERL systems been operationalised? 2.3. Is the governance and operational structure of the programme effectively supporting implementation and ensuring transparency and collaboration, while reducing overlaps and inefficiencies? 2.4 Is the programme management and financial management fit-for-purpose?

- The MERL Framework does not appear to have been effectively operationalised and resourced, particularly annual joint country reviews of progress.
- There are deficiencies in the governance and operational structure of the programme that impact on implementation.
- EPMAP Programme financial management constrains the timely delivery of inputs in some areas, for example, MPI staff travel.

Effectiveness

In this section we examine progress made on the Programme's outputs and outcomes. Firstly, we examine the extent in which it supported Pacific biosecurity agencies to maintain export assurances for fresh produce exports to New Zealand, and whether the outputs have been of high quality, and to cost and time. We then consider the working relationships between EPMAP and other agencies including PHAMA Plus and PACER Plus on how the working relationships function.³⁸

4.2.1 There are synergies between EPMAP and other Pacific biosecurity agencies to maintain export assurances for fresh produce to New Zealand.

Pacific Biosecurity Agencies

The Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO) is embedded within the organisation of the South Pacific Community (SPC) and works collaboratively with National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPOs) to further develop national Biosecurity legislation, Pest Risk and import Risk Assessments, Biosecurity surveillance, early detection and response and National Reporting Obligations. The PPPO also carries out capacity building for NPPOs on pre-border, border and post-border activities and how to do assessments and relevant biosecurity treatments to address these biosecurity transboundary risks.

With respect to market access the PPPO seeks to *"Improve pathways to international markets by facilitating the mobility of learners and workers, assisting private enterprises to access international markets, and providing support to PICs to improve their capacity to meet phytosanitary and biosecurity standards to safeguard trade"*³⁹.

Stakeholders⁴⁰ interviewed from these agencies were very positive about their interactions with MPI. They provided examples how MPI provides support, such as reaching out to SPC when they have training courses for BAF, so colleagues from other PIC laboratories and SPC can be included. *"It provides an opportunity for SPC to reach the Pacific more widely"* (037). Another example includes the opportunity for SPC during the semester break to borrow the University of the South Pacific (USP) and BAF's microscopes. This increases the number of technicians that can be properly trained.

Although MPI cannot implement different standards, the Pacific stakeholders queried whether the export pathways could be streamlined to make it easier for growers to meet these standards.

³⁸ This is also covered, in part, in KRQ1.

³⁹ Cited in: "Improving Plant Biosecurity in the Pacific Islands," ACIAR September 2021.

⁴⁰ 034, 036, 037.

National Plant Protection Offices

The NPPOs are the mandated in-country agencies for biosecurity in the PICs and *inter alia* responsible for implementation of each country's EPMAP activities.

Stakeholders⁴¹ said that the EPMAP Programme is helping to identify impediments to HTFA and exploring other treatment opportunities (the HTFA is old technology, expensive to run and maintain and the treatment is only accepted in New Zealand). Alternatives discussed include Irradiation and Vapour Heat Treatment (VHT). They also added that MPI work on disease status surveillance and help with updating the list of diseases is very much appreciated.⁴² The EPMAP Programme had also helped shorten processing time and that this has been key to approval of the watermelon and the pineapple workplans.

While stakeholders said that sending senior staff who are involved in with the EPMAP and the EPBP programmes to New Zealand on secondment is very beneficial and they would like to see this happen more often, some issues were raised about taking staff away from their duties for extended periods of time particularly for the border security training. There is concern about the number and the level of training of extension staff for market access work. Stakeholders suggested there could be opportunities for NPPOs to help deliver some of the training through a 'train-the-trainers' approach, or to look regionally for training support.

Some stakeholders were concerned with the time it was taking to open new pathways, and that training should also focus on the private sector.

PHAMA Plus⁴³

The PHAMA Plus programme is aligned with and supportive of the EPMAP programme through mutual investment in market access regulations, market supply systems (quality and productivity) as well as export and processing pathways. Specifically, the work by PHAMA Plus compliments support to farmers and agribusinesses on biosecurity and market access constraints, quality assurance and certification systems. Recent examples of PHAMA Plus work that is common to both programmes include:

- **Root crops market survey** (Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu). This study was supported from PTI and provides an up-to-date review on export market opportunities for tropical root crops. The study presents comprehensive and up-to-date information on general export trading patterns and trends, combined with country and market-specific supply-side and demand-side market opportunities and constraints.⁴⁴
- **Cost Analysis of Root Crop Exports** (Fiji). The Fiji Market Access Working Group (MAWG) requested this study to identify costs along the value chain. The analysis work focused on the two main root crop export pathways: fresh/chilled taro to New Zealand and frozen cassava to Australia.⁴⁵

⁴¹ 034, 036, 042, 071, 082.

⁴² While the training comes under the EPBP programme those that attended the training were often involved in both programmes and there is overlap.

⁴³ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/pacific-horticultural-and-agricultural-market-access-program-phama-plus-investment-design-document.pdf>.

⁴⁴ <https://phamaplus.com.au/resources/technical-reports/root-crops-market-study/>.

⁴⁵ <https://phamaplus.com.au/resources/technical-reports/cost-analysis-root-crop-exports-fiji/>.

- **HACCP Accreditation.** This initiative to address the increasing pressure on exporters to comply with food safety and quality standards that can be independently verified by a third party and may be a regulatory requirement for market access and/or an opportunity to enter a market. Activities focus on development of a remote HACCP audit system that allows Pacific Island export companies to either maintain their existing HACCP certification or to have their system audited for first time.⁴⁶

Overall, stakeholders thought that MPI's approach is complementing the work PHAMA-Plus undertakes. One example provided was that PHAMA Plus is tasked to provide MPI with market research for the five project countries (i.e. gathering information and data, examining how many pathways are being accessed, why and why not? How to improve access, etc). PHAMA Plus also works with relevant ministries, although this has proved a challenge as this work is in addition to the ministries own work.

Stakeholders see PHAMA Plus as playing a facilitating role, and that it coordinates well with MPI.

"I see cohesion and symmetry between what PHAMA Plus does and what experts from New Zealand are doing. MPI knows the policies, they are at the border, they know what Tonga needs to do to be able to export to New Zealand. For example, the ePhyto system is a better approach for commercial exporters and PHAMA Plus has provided training for the last two years. PHAMA Plus also provided ePhyto hardware to MAFF. Where MPI works with the government, PHAMA Plus works with the private sector supporting services and training in collaboration with their stakeholders in the sector, and from MPI" (088).

PHAMA Plus openly shares with MPI what it is doing and is trying to better co-ordinate with other donors. It partners with PACER Plus on market development, and they work towards common goals and areas where they can work together, such as fumigation capacity. PHAMA Plus is also working with SPC on certification of formal exporters.

PACER Plus

Under PACER Plus, Australia and New Zealand assist PICs to improve their SPS capabilities, so that they can convert access opportunities in Australian and New Zealand markets into actual trade gains. Relevant PACER-Plus activities are focused on the development of Rules of Origin, labelling, training on fumigation techniques, and the development of food safety and export standards. PACER Plus has also funded training for the e-Phyto system.

The primary role of PACER Plus is to implement the agreement related to trade, tariffs, taxes, and traceability to ensure all is adhered to, but has recently taken on a bigger role to plug gaps in the value chain. Its annual work plans help to reduce duplication, and it works closely with organisations including DAFF, MPI, SPC, PTI (in both Australia and New Zealand), PHAMA Plus.

"We now have a good system to share info and do planning so we can coordinate. PACER Plus tries to fill the gaps, for example with training and equipment, and by sharing information" (036).

⁴⁶ PHAMA-Plus partners with HACCP Australia to deliver this project.

However, it was noted by stakeholders that at the outset there was some overlap with the export pathway work, but that there is now better clarity between PACER Plus and PHAMA Plus. This has been achieved by scheduling more coordination meetings and providing better communication. There was also some overlap with DAFF, but PACER Plus now focuses on where to supplement and add value, which highlighted issues of importance of good coordination.

4.2.2 There are examples where the outputs achieved are of high quality, cost effective and timely

There has not been enough progress towards achievement of the MERL outputs, for example 'PCE systems strengthened', or in some cases there is insufficient data to effectively assess the quality and effectiveness of outputs. Therefore, the MTR has focused on the value of written reports that form the foundation for achievement of outputs.

- **Strengthening profitable use of existing pathways for fresh vegetables, fruits, and cut flowers and foliage between five PICs and New Zealand reports.** These reports were undertaken for Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu (Fiji has not approved the draft at the time of writing) and aim to:
 - Identify market characteristics, utilisation levels, constraints, opportunities and prioritised intervention areas that seek to unlock pathway potential.
 - Identify potential opportunities, gaps in market knowledge and/or beneficial changes to business models to inform priority pathways and guide where MPI and their Pacific development partners can direct investments.

The reports provide comprehensive information based on quantitative and qualitative data to develop a short list of products that could be exported and identify the recent and planned support and interest on the products. The current pathway status for each crop including MPI compliance data is described, and the outline of strategies and recommendations needed to further develop these crops and open pathways.

- **Phyosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) reports.** PCE is a process that assesses the capacity and capability of a NPPO to fulfil the required functions identified in the IPPC. The reports identify deficiencies in areas such as: (i) understanding the role and function of the NPPO, (ii) export certification, (iii) surveillance, and (iv) pest identification.

The value of these reports is in the benefit of hindsight based on previous interventions from 2008 of what is working well and what is not. For example, the Fiji PCE Report notes that "*the movement by BAF from 100% consignment inspections to sample inspections is working well and that current training is good, but that refresher training should be scheduled.*" With respect to the issue of constraints to issuing certificates to smallholder farmers because of the lack of biosecurity staff the report recommends (Recommendation 6): "*That a business case be developed to consider centralising inspection and export activity at a single purpose-built pack house in Sigatoka.*" It is noted that this approach towards a more uniform inspection and certification process has been implemented in Samoa through the establishment of a central packhouse and in Tonga through investment in individual packhouses.

- **Training Needs Assessment of the Biosecurity Authorities (NPPOs).** The Training Needs Assessments (TNAs) look at the current training environment, identify any gaps and outlines recommendations and opportunities to address these gaps where possible. The methodology seeks to determine the scope of the current training, what is working well and what is not working well, and what are the areas where further training is needed.

The value of the TNAs is that they identify (through PIC stakeholder workshops) who is responsible for different areas of training specific areas where training is needed, the context for delivery of training programmes such as presentation methods, and the impact of training programmes on daily work programmes. They also reference and build on the PCE recommendations where they relate to training and make recommendations for ensuring that training programmes are designed for the PIC and context, and that work towards building the resources for a sustainable training programme across the PICs.

Impact

4.2.3 There are examples where EPMAP has had positive impact on some working practices

The following examples are based on stakeholder interviews and meeting minutes:

- The pathway for Tahitian Limes from Vanuatu was closed because of pest interception. Assistance from the EPMAP Programme resulted in the pathway being re-opened in 2023 with the first shipment earning VT300,000.
- Fiji and Tonga have made good progress on agreed work tasks at the last in-country engagements, and are keen to continue to engage with the EPMAP Programme. SOPs have been completed for citrus (Fiji) and updated for watermelon (Tonga), and shared with growers and exporters to ensure consignments meet New Zealand import requirements. The pathway for pineapple exports from Tonga has been opened, however the SOPs have not yet been developed.
- It should be noted that the EPMAP Programme will not boost exports in isolation but needs to work with PHAMA Plus programmes and national initiatives that aim at providing support services for export production.
- Tonga breadfruit. This crop is not produced on large scale commercial plantations, but as backyard crop involving many households. This makes it difficult to develop systems. The EPMAP Programme has run workshops to map out the system, however further work on developing SOPs is dependent on finding an alternative treatment to the HTFA process.
- Although ePhyto is in the early stages of introduction in Fiji, and its use is largely restricted to BAF, feedback from stakeholders indicates that for BAF staff and commercial farmers it will be very effective in reducing the paperwork involved and managing the supply chain.
- Shipping delays from Tonga have consistently resulted in spoilage and loss of produce upon arrival in New Zealand. The Programme has assisted Tonga MAFF to quicken the process of transporting treated watermelons to the airport in readiness for air freight. This procedure is now part of the Watermelon SOP. As a result of this improvement, the first trial consignment of new season 2023

watermelons was air freighted to New Zealand in September without any interception of pests upon arrival.

The minutes of the EPMAP Programme Governance Report notes that the Programme has had a positive impact on a number of working activities including:⁴⁷

- The face-to-face workshops have greatly improved working relations with the competent authorities.
- The inclusion of growers, exporters, other government agencies (e.g. Ministry of Trade) and donors/partners (SPC, PHAMA Plus) has provided a greater perspective of the issues and developing workable solutions.
- PICs understand the administrative and operations aspects of their obligations to their trading partners as a signatory to the World Trade Organisation SPS agreement, and use this information to identify the gaps and options for improvement in each country's export system. Plans are being developed to undertake the activities for the remaining three years of the EPMAP Programme. Countries need to confirm what is achievable, set high level commitment and indicate areas where donors can assist.
- An enhanced level of understanding, appreciation and NPPO capacity to strengthen the robustness of phytosanitary certification systems. Discussions have encouraged PICs to review their export strategies and cross agency priorities and alignment.
- Endorsement for the progression of work on commercial production in Fiji, Samoa and Tonga, which highlight obligations on growers and exporters, and encourage them to take more responsibility for the biosecurity status of their products.
- Focus groups have been established and for the new financial year will be working on tasks identified from the gaps analysis of Fiji's phytosanitary certification system.
- The establishment of the HITPAC⁴⁸ group has led to a better understanding, and detailed analyses has been undertaken of the key themes that have been identified by all countries. These include technical training for officials and growers/exporters, alternative treatment options (mostly for fruit fly), and the need for a co-ordinated strategy and approach to marketing and production of fresh produce.

4.2.4 Some aspects of the MERL Framework have been effectively operationalised

The MERL logic diagram was developed in a participatory manner between MFAT and MPI, with facilitation by a MERL expert. It is based on a problem analysis and assumptions that were relevant at the time that the MERL framework was being developed. The EPMAP Road Map 2022–2026 provides a logical flow of activities that follows the MERL framework of activities, outputs and outcomes. Assessing the extent to which the MERL Framework has been operationalised is based on whether the programme operational activities have followed the framework activities and whether

⁴⁷ There is no recorded data to substantiate these statements.

⁴⁸ HITPAC stands for Horticultural Import Team Pacific, which includes four MFAT-funded full-time equivalents (FTE) embedded in MPI as well as three MPI funded FTE.

the information from the programme activities has been used to make decisions and if reporting processes have been followed.

- **MERL Activity: Existing systems assessed, and gaps and needs understood.** The purpose of this activity is for training design and implementation, and involves a baseline review undertaken annually. Seven workshops were undertaken to identify gaps in the current export systems with the aim of evaluating options and developing an action plan for each PIC. The output of this exercise was the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Reports (PCEs) for each PIC that provides baseline data for training. PCEs for all PICs have been completed and the needs have been identified. It does not appear that the PICs have been evaluated and how the recommendations are being used to update training under this programme.
- **MERL Activity. Export assurance training designed to meet PIC-specific needs – documents analysis feedback annually.** The purpose of this activity is to develop training delivery plans for use by PIC trainers and PIC partners. The TNA has been completed for each PIC with clear guidelines for developing training programmes. It does not appear that the TNAs have been evaluated and how the recommendations will be used to develop training programmes.
- **MERL Activity: Training workshops for NPPOs (growers/exporters) delivered – training workshop trainers.** Training modules appear to be based on current MPI training modules. Workshop evaluations for this activity have been at the level of emojis that represent the level of satisfaction of participants in the course and do not provide information that could be used to adjust training content or delivery.
- **MERL Activity: On-line learning materials developed.** There are no reports on this activity.
- **MERL Activity. Follow-up mentoring and/or coaching support for NPPOs project.** There are no reports on this activity.
- **MERL Activity: Market systems research commissioned.** Reports for strengthening profitable use of existing pathways has been completed for Tonga, Vanuatu, Samoa, Fiji and the Cook Islands. PTI has not yet assessed the trade demand against PIC shortlisted commodities.
- **MERL Activity: Ongoing market research activities (quarterly reports).** There are no reports on this activity.
- **MERL Activity: Annual scientific forum (facilitated discussions).** There are no records of these activities.
- **MERL Activity: Regular coordination meetings (e.g. PHAMA, SPC).** For this MTR we did not sight minutes of meetings between the MFAT/MPI and other agencies, but the minutes of the Governance Group make mention of discussion with PHAMA Plus, PACER Plus, CABI⁴⁹, PTI, DAFF and PIC government officials. The purpose of these meetings has been to discuss mutual areas of concern such as the HTFA.

⁴⁹ Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux, now known as CAB International, <https://www.cabi.org/about-cabi/our-history/>

MERL data

Joint annual country reviews were designed to be a key mechanism under the MERL to identify the main improvements in agencies' biosecurity capacity and the main challenges encountered by the programme. No such reviews have been undertaken, and this needs to be remedied. There have been no regular surveys of PIC stakeholders to gather qualitative and quantitative data that could be used to support adaptive management. For example, the EPMAP Governance minutes note that, PICs understand the administrative and operational aspects of their obligations to their trading partners as a signatory to the WTO SPS agreement, but this is not evidenced by data. There appears to have been no reviews to determine whether the social, economic and environmental context of the PICs has altered and whether the assumptions, risks and outcomes remain relevant, and whether changes need to be made to the logic diagram.

4.2.5 There are deficiencies in the governance and operational structure of the programme that impact on implementation

Information used for the MTR is based on reports at each level, and stakeholder feedback.

Governance Group (GG)

The Governance Group has representation from both MFAT and MPI.⁵⁰ Governance Group meetings are held quarterly. The Business Plan states the focus of the Governance Group is on the strategic direction of the MPI/MFAT partnership, risks, the political context, significant biosecurity concerns and overall alignment of the Programme.⁵¹ The design of the governance structure was based on feedback from MPI on the PBP governance and advice from the Aid Programme's Fisheries, Labour Mobility and Invasive Species activities which are also run in partnership with NZ Inc. agencies. The ToR for the GG covers six reporting areas.

- Assess the overall programme progress against the intended outputs and outcomes defined in the Theory of Change. What difference is the project making?
- Highlight the most significant achievements (or difference made) during the period. Please clearly indicate this project's contribution to achievements.
- Summarise key challenges, issues and risks that have emerged during the reporting period and how they have been managed. Include any adaptation made to scope, timeframe, budget.
- Highlight any specific lessons learned.
- List any communications opportunities.
- Financial reporting.

Progress reports are based on discussion of activities including what has been achieved and what is still outstanding rather than on strategies. Attention is given to highlighting

⁵⁰ MFAT: Unit manager and the lead agriculture advisor. MPI: Director of diagnostic and Surveillance Services, Director of Animal and plant health, Chief Veterinary Officer and the Manager International Relations. Observers include: MFAT; Programme Development Manager, Activity Manager. MPI; Manager Plant Health and Environment Laboratory. Programme Manager Pacific Animal Health, Project Manager Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership, Manager Horticulture Imports.

⁵¹ Summarised from: Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership: Detailed Business Case.

problem areas. For example, although the Cook Islands have stated that EPMAP is important, they have indicated they are currently focusing their efforts on domestic market production as this is currently more economically viable, and have requested that the Programme is put on hold until later in 2024.

Recommendations arising from commissioned reports and actions arising out of discussions with other agencies including SPC, DAFF, PHAMA Plus and PACER Plus are grouped into three work streams: training treatment and trade for further action by the respective workstream group, key challenges, issues and risks are identified, and actions are prioritised. Mention is made of communication opportunities with other agencies. It is noted that communications appear to be on an as needed basis.

PIC Governance Groups (PGG)

Membership of these groups varies between countries. The purpose of these groups is to govern in-country delivery of the programme, agree and sign off priorities/workplans, track progress, sign off key documents (such as SOPs and export plans), and to manage risks. PGGs have been established in Fiji and Tonga. At this stage it is not proposed to establish a PGG in the Cook Islands. The groups in Vanuatu and Samoa are still in the early stages of formation.

The PGG in Fiji and Tonga have only recently been established and it is too early to assess the value of their input into the MFAT/MPI Governance Group.

The Working Group (WG)

Membership comprises representation from MFAT and MPI⁵² and is chaired by the Project Development Manager. The WG is tasked with monitoring the operational management of the partnership, ensures that decisions are based on a systems-wide view, monitors key risks and issues and alignment with other activities.

The WG meetings inform the MFAT/MPI governance group on achievements, progress of activities, identification of problems and possible solutions and engagement with other agencies. Meeting minutes indicate that the WG is very engaged with stakeholders and that problems and strategies for resolution are identified in a timely manner. Meeting minutes indicate that specific issues impacting on PIC exports are identified, e.g. thrips in Fiji but in addition the WG has adopted a "broader picture" approach for example:

- **New opportunities** – How do we put plans in place for new opportunities such as pineapples and citrus?
- **Market led and demand led** – Export pathway work needs to be based on whether there is strong demand in New Zealand and interest from the PICs. Is there market demand from New Zealand? Can the Pacific countries be cost competitive? Are their commercial exporters? Are these opportunities commercially viable?
- **Multi-sector approach** – How can we bring farmer groups, exporters and biosecurity agencies together? What needs to be done in the field, at treatment facilities and packhouses?

⁵² MFAT: Project Development Manager, Activity Manager, Senior Policy Manager (PACER-Plus), Senior Advisor Pacific Connections, Lead Advisor-Agriculture MPI: Manger Horticulture, Specialist Advisor Pacific Imports.

Workstream groups

In response to discussions between MPI and PICs the EPMAP Programme is in the process of establishing groups for treatment, trade and training and will be signed off in due course. Membership of the workstreams will comprise representatives from MPI including the four specialists embedded in MPI and funded through the programme.

The objectives of the workstream groups are:

- **Trade.** To determine constraints, commodities, and opportunities that project countries should prioritise, MPI commissioned PHAMA Plus to undertake market research to identify priority fresh produce commodity types that could be exported from PICs into New Zealand. PTI was commissioned to determine the market demand for horticulture products in New Zealand.
- **Treatment.** For countries to have viable treatment options and sustainable support for effective and continuous implementation of treatments. For this work to be sustained into the future, a system of management is required that continually explores alternative options, analysed within the capacity of Pacific economies.
- **Training.** To address all training recommendations, prioritised by the project countries, from the above reports whether directly or indirectly through other development projects.

The Workstream Groups have been recently established to improve the response to specific areas. From the meeting minutes it is evident that the Workstream Groups have improved the flow and timeliness of information however more is needed before the impact of these groups can be assessed.

Overall, responses from MPI and MFAT stakeholders largely focus on two main points:

- issues with ongoing staffing and resourcing to manage and implement the remaining programme, and
- issues with earlier governance and operational management approaches for the EPMAP and EPBP Programmes between MFAT and MPI, and it is timely to review.

4.2.6 Programme and financial management in some areas constrains timely delivery of inputs

Recent changes in leadership in the Ministries of Agriculture in Fiji and Samoa has resulted in changes to priorities in some areas, and led to requests for changes in the focus and prioritisation of the work programmes over the next few years.

In Samoa, the new CEO wants to focus on strengthening the ministry's core business (pest identification and border protection), but currently does not have the capacity or capability (the right staff) to work on market access training.

As previously mentioned, although the EPMAP Programme is viewed positively as a practical initiative to improve market access, stakeholders thought that it was in hindsight possibly too ambitious resulting in huge workloads for MPI staff involved.

"After two years the team found they were spending more time working on project management and not enough going in-country, so [we] repurposed an MPI role into a dedicated project management role. The project also needed more staff, so [we] set up a 'HUB' of four

biosecurity staff, including a communications function, for staff to work in-country to help develop export assurance requirements, 'get them on board', and to look at their import systems" (023).

"I don't think the project's intention is being met yet, as it's too ambitious. Too many countries and outputs and not enough funding (\$7m over 5 years), and the timeframe is too short to measure success..." (020).

The above quote refers to the Programme not factoring the cost of MPI management involvement in the EPMAP. This was not an issue when the Programme began, but there are now new cost saving pressures on the New Zealand public sector.

There is always going to be some tension with competing priorities between MFAT and MPI. However, there is general agreement that there needs to be a 're-set' and an opportunity to re-examine the priorities for the remaining programme period, so as to get better alignment between MPI and MFAT to focus on commonalities and the economic wellbeing of partner countries.

4.3 Efficiency and Sustainability

KRQ3: How efficiently is the programme using its resources?

This KRQ and sub-questions⁵³ relate to Objective 3. It examines efficiency (How well are resources being used?) and sustainability (Will benefits or interventions last?)

Box 4.3: KRQ3 key findings - Efficiency and Sustainability

- Programme activities are not sufficiently advanced to assess if there has been good value for investment and effort.
- Adjustments are needed building capacity and capability to ensure that these activities will endure in the PICs beyond the time frame of the Programme.

Efficiency

4.3.1 Programme activities are not sufficiently advanced to assess if there has been good value for investment and effort

Progress towards meeting the outputs has been slower than planned.

Delivery of activities has also been constrained by the availability of staff in PIC countries to attend training.

The following table shows expenditure progress for the first two years of the programme.

⁵³ Sub-questions for KRQ3 are 3.1, Has the programme achieved good value for the investment and effort? 3.2 How is sustainability (e.g. of capability and capacity building) for the programme being considered?

Table 6. Budget and spend to date

Period	Expenditure
Year 1 (01/07/2022 – 30/06/2023)	Of the \$877,500 budgeted for the period \$769,848 was spent with 51% of this being for non-output related salaries of for the 4 FTEs embedded in MPI with a further \$37,000 for the SPS Coordinator. The only other expenditure for that period was \$343,522 for Output 1.
Year 2 (01/07/2023 – 30/06/2024)	<p>The forecasted expenditure was \$2,020,773 of which \$479,000 had been spent as at 30/4/2024. This is largely made up of salaries and output 1 related expenses.</p> <p>In late 2023 the Budget was adjusted for the remainder of year 2 (up to 30/06/2024) to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$367,000 for Output 1 ○ \$230,000 for Output 2 ○ \$230,000 for Output 4 ○ \$200,000 for Output 5 <p>No expenditure has been budgeted for Outputs 2 and 3 for year 2.</p>

The HITPAC Report (June–October 2023) also notes a number of challenges in meeting outputs including:

- Difficulties with arranging travel to some countries.
- Getting timely responses back from countries on reports and activities.
- Processing recommendations from the PCE reports has been difficult because of inadequate capacity and resources within the NPPOs.

Sustainability

4.3.2 Adjustments are needed to building capacity and capability to ensure that these activities will endure in the PICs beyond the timeframe of the Programme

All partner country stakeholders said the training was important and very useful. However, they felt that the training was taking staff away from their work duties for long periods and this was not sustainable as there was not enough capacity in their organisation to ensure the work was being undertaken.

"[We understand] that high attendance at staff training is a better use of programme resources, but this does not work for BAF. Better approach would be to train a few staff in the new Export plan for a few days and focus training on 'train the trainer' who would go out to train the other staff" (037).

"Training is relevant and useful, but we would like to see more training at different levels. Train the Trainers reduces disruption, but we also need to look regionally for training" (082).

Stakeholders also wanted to retain skilled staff by providing more advanced training. They were concerned that because there is high staff turnover at their organisation, skills developed from the training can be lost. Some of these stakeholders suggested approaches that would ensure training can be sustained and embedded once the programme was completed. These included a 'train the trainer' approach and using other organisations to deliver some of the training, such as the PPPO, PHAMA Plus and SPC, to complement MPI's training or fill in gaps not covered by the EPMAP Programme training.

5 Lessons, Conclusions and Recommendations

This section discusses lessons, our conclusions based on the overall findings, and identifies recommendations to inform the next phase of the programme.

5.1 Coherence and Relevance

The EPMAP Programme is a priority for partner countries and for New Zealand's International Aid Programme through their commitment to improving the economic wellbeing of rural people, and it is aligned to MPI's mandate to protect New Zealand's food sector through reducing the threat of biologically damaging incursions. The EPMAP Programme training activities are relevant to reducing New Zealand's Biosecurity import risks. Through the EPMAP Programme New Zealand's Biosecurity import risks are being reduced and export pathways from PICs to New Zealand can remain open and maintained.

Lessons

- It is important to monitor the level of commitment and the resources that PIC governments can commit to the Programme.
- Taking a risks-based approach to understanding the potential threat of biologically damaging organisms on New Zealand continues to underpin the relevance of the Programme.
- At the country level there is a lack of clarity around the roles of other agencies, and this constrains harmonisation and synergies between activities.
- The current New Zealand Government economy drive may affect the implementation of EPBP. The Governance Group will need to discuss the impact of the MPI restructuring on delivery of the EPBP and agree on what changes will be required to the Programme. Once these have been agreed between the two agencies, they will need to communicate these changes to EPBP staff and participating countries where appropriate.

Conclusions

Market access for fresh horticulture products remains a priority for all the PICs to the extent that it is an integral part of agriculture and trade policies for each country. However, the translation of policies and strategies for exports into resourced implementation plans that help strengthen pathways is weak apart from the initiatives to invest in central packhouses in Samoa and Tonga. Priorities can also vary through the course of the timeframe of country-specific policies and strategies, usually five years. Although outside MPI's role and expertise and the scope of this programme, all the PICs expressed the view that processing products would offer an export pathway that would reduce the demands of compliance with biosecurity regulations. PICs expressed the view that the domestic market also offered a financially viable alternative to exporting fresh produce and without the requirement of stringent compliance systems.

The Programme remains a priority for the IDC Programme, both at the regional level through Goal 3 the Pacific Regional Four-year Development Plan, and the high-level objectives through the 4-year plans developed with each country. The Programme has

been designed in response to country needs, although the timeframe is too ambitious. MPI staff at the operational level are very committed and have developed an excellent rapport with partners in the PICs. Recent changes in Senior MPI management and government cuts have led to issues between management priorities and operational focus.

The importance of the Programme in reducing the threats of biologically significant organisms varies between PICs. Clearly in the Cook Islands, where there are no exports the Programme has much less relevance. However, in countries such as Fiji and Tonga who have a long history of exporting to New Zealand and an equally long history of pathway closures through incursions – it is envisaged that the Programme will reduce the threat of introduction of damaging organisms.

The objectives of PACER-Plus are broadly related to increasing trade in general, and take a holistic role over the whole Programme and fill in the gaps not covered by other programmes such as activities that relate ePhyto training and strengthening the skills, and knowledge to biosecurity and quarantine personal. There was some overlap with the Programme and the activities on PHAMA-Plus, but these have been resolved and now the programmes are complementary and mutually supportive.

The DFAT/DAFF Programme has a similar mandate to MPI in that it aims to protect the Australian agriculture and food systems against biological incursions. In general, the working relationship between the DFAT/MPI and MFAT/MPI has worked well. However, stakeholder feedback indicated that although there was harmonisation of the two Programmes at a regional level there was still some confusion at the country level.

Stakeholder feedback highlighted that while the EPBP Programme was a government-to-government programme, the EPMAP Programme has a strong commercial focus focussed on meeting market demand which does not always align with government priorities.

The PCE reports identify paper-based administrative-level issues that constrain the market access pathways. The reports also conclude that the paper-based system is time-consuming and prone to transcription errors that lead to pathway failures. The adoption of the ePhyto system by EPMAP Programme will be more efficient and reduce the risk of errors through incorrect recording. PACER Plus has implemented the ePhyto awareness training system. Although the system is still in the early stages of being rolled out, stakeholder feedback strongly supports the use of the system but there are reservations about whether it might be difficult for smallholders to operate.

Recommendations

We recommend that:

1. Annual meetings are conducted between senior MFAT and MPI staff with the heads of relevant PIC ministries to validate their ongoing commitment to develop export pathways for fresh produce and to identify the resources available.
2. Although value-adding processing lies outside MPI's mandate and other development assistance provides support, further consideration should be given to developing value-added processing as an alternative to fresh produce pathway exporting horticulture products and/or improving the linkages with other programmes such as PHAMA Plus.
3. Senior MPI and MFAT staff reaffirm Programme goals and objectives and the level of resourcing needed for each country.

4. The engagement process with stakeholders to develop country work plans is improved to ensure that full buy-in and commitment to their contributions have been taken on board.
5. Noting that MPI's contribution towards ePhyto ends in December 2024, a scoping exercise needs to be undertaken to determine cost-effective systems for ensuring the smallholders can be incorporated into an ePhyto system.

5.2 Effectiveness and Impact

The EPMAP Programme is somewhat supporting Pacific biosecurity agencies to maintain export assurances for fresh produce exports to New Zealand. There are also examples where the outputs achieved are of high quality, cost-effective and timely, and where the programme has had positive impact on some working practices. However, the MERL Framework does not appear to have been effectively operationalised. There are deficiencies in the governance and operational structure of the programme that impact on implementation, and the programme financial management in some areas constrains timely delivery of inputs.

Lessons

- It is understood that MPI needs to work to global Import Health Standards, however, it is difficult to apply rigid standard procedures for the New Zealand context to the capacity limitation context in the Pacific.⁵⁴
- The current approach to training relies on in-house ability and capacity within MPI. It has been suggested that it would be helpful if SPC was able to conduct generic SPS training with more PIC stakeholders and to other countries. While it's not in the mandate of this Programme to provide training to SPC, there is interest by them in this being considered. SPC would need to be resourced accordingly.
- Effective programme management requires an understanding of the Pacific context and the flexibility to adapt the training approach, for example, develop in-house expertise and consideration of train the trainer approaches in a formal way.
- The lack of clarity around the roles of different agencies is causing confusion at the national level.
- The social, political, and economic environment of PICs is evolving, and it is timely to re-examine relevance of upcoming activities before they are acted on.
- The MERL Framework could be an effective management tool provided it is fully operationalised and resourced.
- Programme strategies will continue to evolve and should guide adjustments to operational activities.

⁵⁴ For example, to allow for a longer timeframe, but the Review team did not ask detailed questions or form a view.

Conclusions

The Programme is aligned with the objectives of the PPPO in that it supports improving access to international pathways through improving the capacity of PICs to meet phytosanitary and biosecurity standards. Stakeholder feedback was very positive particularly where it concerned the proactive stance taken by MPI to reach out to SPC. Concerns were expressed around the need to streamline pathways for the PIC context and adopt a 'train the trainer' approach. It was also suggested by some stakeholders that EPMAP Programme may be more effectively facilitated if managers external to MPI were used.

The Programme has made a significant improvement towards improving synergies with PHAMA Plus and PACER Plus through sharing information and coordination of activities. However, while the roles of different agencies are well understood at the regional level there is still some confusion at the national level particularly for training activities.

There has not been enough progress to assess the quality, cost-effectiveness, and timeliness of outputs. It is intended that completed reports for (i) Training Needs Analysis, (ii) Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation, (iii) Strengthening Profitable Use of Existing Pathways, provide in-depth information needed to proceed with the development of training programmes and the foundation for developing and understanding of market demand.

Although the Programme activities are behind schedule it has made a positive impact on current practices such as reopening pathways, air freighting of watermelons and good progress on SOPs for citrus.

There have been no regular surveys of PIC stakeholders to gather qualitative and quantitative data that could be used to support adaptive management. The MTR did not undertake review of the social, economic, environmental context of the PICs to determine if it has altered and whether the assumptions, risks and outcomes remain relevant, and whether changes need to be made to the logic diagram. This could be included in the end of Programme evaluation.

The establishment of the Working Stream Groups has strengthened the operational structure by sharpening the focus of the Programme on areas where problems and bottlenecks have been identified and provides a mechanism for direct responses. The Working Group provides timely reports on activities to the Governance Group and is engaged with other regional stakeholders. The MPI/MFAT Governance Group is well-informed on programme activities but needs to be more concerned with strategies that impact on efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. These include interagency planning, as well decisions that relate to PIC governance groups. Stakeholder feedback emphasised the need for private sector inclusion perhaps at the PIC governance level.

Management of the Programme has been underestimated in the design phase but does require significant human resources.

Recommendations

We recommend that:

1. Import Health Standards are reviewed with the objective of adapting them to the PIC context where possible and without compromising their purpose.
2. To re-examine the Programme management approach to identify any changes that may be needed to improve effectiveness for the remaining period of the Programme.
3. Programme Management works with other regional agencies to improve the national level understanding of roles and responsibilities to strengthening market access pathways.
4. The Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) system reports be reviewed to factor in contextual relevance and then used as the basis for determining ongoing capacity development work.
5. The MERL Framework is operationalised (including undertaking annual joint country reviews) through greater resourcing to determine if the outcomes, outputs, and activities remain relevant and revised where needed.
6. Essential data for the MERL Framework is identified and surveys are conducted to collect information.
7. A user-friendly database for the MERL Framework is established and maintained.
8. It is timely to refresh the ToR, so that the membership of the MPI/MFAT Governance Group and the scope of its mandate are discussed and agreed by this Group.
9. The Governance Group agenda format for meetings is reviewed to ensure that provision is made for the identification and development of strategies both within and outside the programme that are needed to ensure that market access pathways remain viable.
10. Priority is given to facilitate the formation and operation of PIC governance groups, and membership could include private sector representation.

5.3 Efficiency and Sustainability

Programme activities are not sufficiently advanced to assess if there has been good value for investment and effort. However, adjustments will be needed to build capacity and capability to ensure that these activities endure in the PICs beyond the time frame of the Programme.

Lessons

- Having meetings themed on specific issues with agencies and partners has been very helpful in understanding the challenges and issues and aligning work activities.
- Delivery of activities needs to be based on a timetable for each PIC.

Conclusions

The EPMAP Programme can only proceed as fast as the PICs are able to schedule activities. The issue of slower progress than anticipated is related to an unrealistic timeframe rather than poor performance. The current approach of training staff will not lead to sustainable in-country capacity for training, and lacks the flexibility needed to allow staff to attend training without it impacting on their work programmes. The problem is also exacerbated by the training programmes of other donors including PHAMA Plus, PACER Plus, and SPC.

Recommendations

We recommend that:

1. The workplan for activities be updated in consultation with PIC agencies every quarter.
2. All staff travel be considered and approved by the Governance Group as part of its approval of each year's annual work-plan. This approach should not prevent MPI from carrying out its processes which ensure value for money and accountability for expenditure.
3. A 'train the trainer' approach is adopted that will enable the NPPO training to become sustainable and extend the reach to more PICs. It would reduce the demands of capacity for each agency and would be a significant step towards sustainability. It is acknowledged, however, that the benefits of additional training in New Zealand are highly regarded by PIC stakeholders.
4. A review of all training programmes, whoever the delivery partner should be, is undertaken to ensure there are no overlaps, and that synergies can be enhanced.

Appendices

Appendix A: MERL Framework

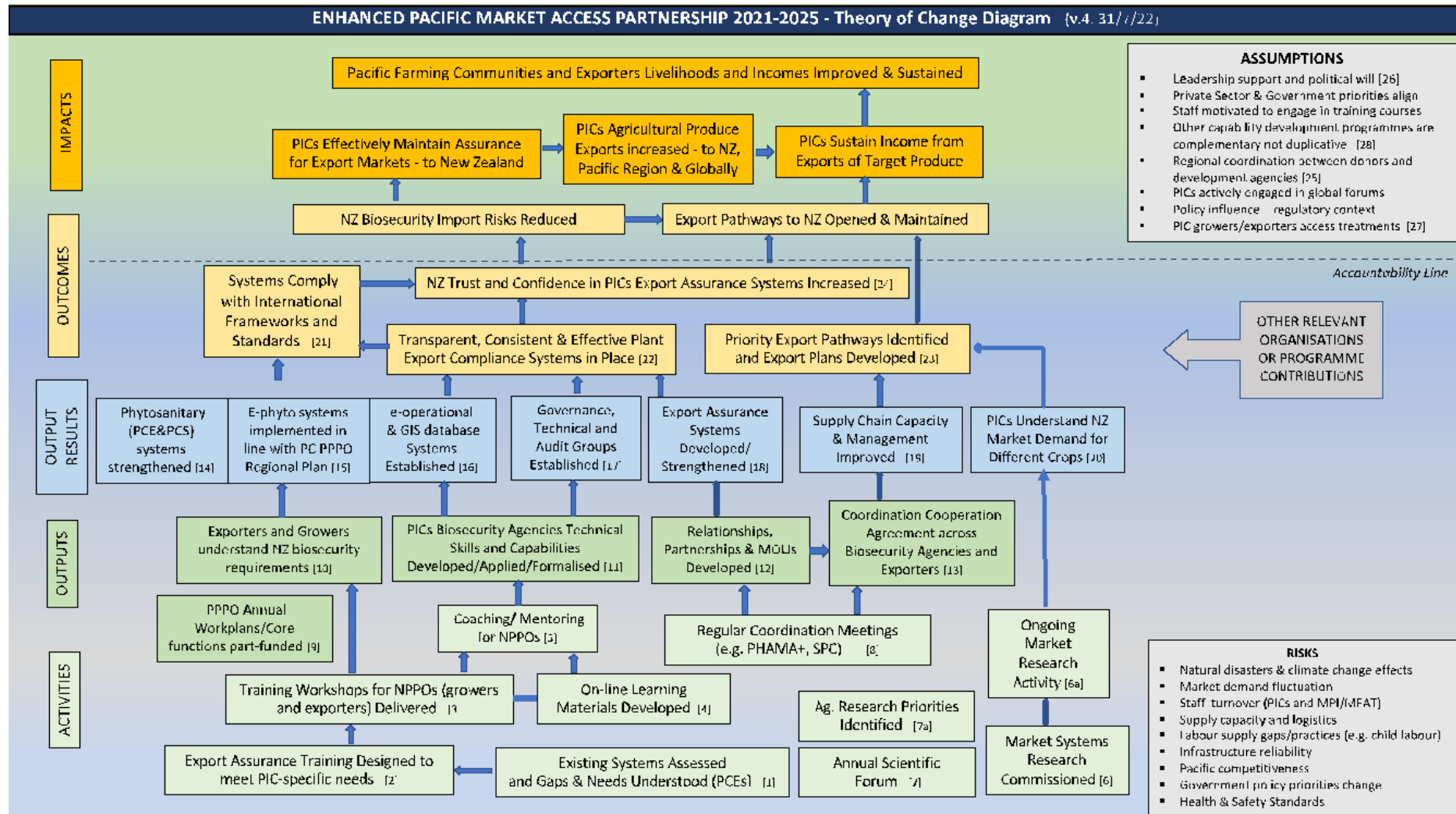
Appendix B: MTR methodology and analytic framework

Appendix C: Relevant source documents

Appendix D: Organisations consulted

Appendix E: Information sheet and consent form

Appendix A. EPMAP Programme Logic diagram



Appendix B. Methodology and analytic framework

MFAT-commissioned evaluations and reviews apply the OECD DAC evaluation criteria to provide a framework to determine the value of programmes, policies, or activities. It is an assessment tool and not all criteria need to be covered – evaluations should be customised to the needs of the relevant stakeholders and the context of the evaluation or review. The objectives and KRQs are based on these criteria.

This MTR used these evaluation criteria, site visits, stakeholder interviews (including group sessions), and desktop review of monitoring data and relevant reports to assess progress to date.

Diagram B1: OECD DAC criteria



Source: OECD DAC

'Relevance' examines whether the programme is doing 'the right things' – the extent to which its objectives and goals are delivering outcomes and impact.

'Coherence' looks at how well the programme fits with in-country governments' priorities, and other development partners' interventions.

'Effectiveness' focuses on whether the programme is achieving its objectives. Here we examine the extent to which the programme is achieving (or is expected to achieve) its objectives, and the sustainability of any impact.

'Efficiency' examines how well the resources are being used; the extent to which the programme interventions deliver (or is likely to deliver) results in an economic and timely way.

'Impact' looks at what difference the programme interventions are making, and whether the extent to which they have generated (or are expected to generate) significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

'Sustainability' looks at whether the benefits will last and the extent to which any net benefits are likely to continue.

Table B1: Analytic framework

MTR Objectives	Key Review Questions	Review sub-questions	OECD DAC Assessment Criteria	Qualitative data and 2ndry-sourced information
<p>Objective 1: To assess the extent to which the programme remains a priority for partner countries and NZ’s International Development Cooperation Programme.</p>	<p>KRQ1: To what extent does the programme remain a priority for partner countries and NZ’s IDCP?</p>	<p>1.1 Are the intended outcomes of the programme still relevant?</p> <p>1.2 Is the programme focused on the right areas with the right partners?</p> <p>1.3 How well does the programme fit with other activities implemented in the following context?</p> <p>1.3.1 Within MPI</p> <p>1.3.2 Between New Zealand agencies (incl. CRIs)</p> <p>1.3.3 within the context of the New Zealand and Australia relationship and government departments</p> <p>1.3.4 within the context of the relevant multilateral agencies, both regional and international</p> <p>1.4 What is the level of interest in, and commitment to, the programme from the key stakeholders?</p>	<p>Relevance and Coherence</p>	<p>Key stakeholder interviews: In-country partner govt officials MFAT/Post officials.</p>

MTR Objectives	Key Review Questions	Review sub-questions	OECD DAC Assessment Criteria	Qualitative data and 2ndry-sourced information
<p>Objective 2:</p> <p>To examine the progress being made in achieving the outputs and outcomes of the programme</p>	<p>KRQ2:</p> <p>What progress has been made to the project’s outputs, and short and medium-term outcomes?</p>	<p>2.1 To what extent has the <u>Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership</u> supported Pacific biosecurity agencies to maintain export assurances for fresh produce exports to New Zealand?</p> <p>2.2 Have outputs been of high quality and to cost and time?</p> <p>2.3 What impact is the programme having on working practices?</p> <p>2.4 To what extent has the programme’s MERL systems been operationalised?</p> <p>2.5 Is the governance and operational structure of the programme effectively supporting implementation (and ensuring transparency and collaboration while reducing overlaps and inefficiencies)?</p> <p>2.6 Is the programme management and financial management fit-for-purpose?</p>	<p>Effectiveness and Impact</p>	<p>Relevant reporting/progress documents</p> <p>Monitoring data</p> <p>Key stakeholder interviews:</p> <p>MFAT officials</p> <p>MPI implementing officials</p> <p>In-country partners – incl. senior leaders, working level representatives from biosecurity agencies</p> <p>Agricultural exporters</p> <p>other relevant stakeholders</p>
<p>Objective 3:</p> <p>To review the value of the programme</p>	<p>KRQ3:</p> <p>How efficiently is the Project using its resources?</p>	<p>3.1 Has the programme achieved good value for the investment and effort?</p> <p>3.2 How is sustainability (e.g. of capability and capacity building) for the programme being considered?</p>	<p>Efficiency and Sustainability</p>	<p>Relevant reporting/progress documents</p> <p>Monitoring data</p> <p>Key stakeholder interviews:</p> <p>In-country partner govt officials</p> <p>MFAT and MPI officials</p>

MTR Objectives	Key Review Questions	Review sub-questions	OECD DAC Assessment Criteria	Qualitative data and 2ndry-sourced information
<p>Objective 4</p> <p>Lessons learned for improvement – to identify the key learnings to increase positive impact in the future.</p>	<p>Lessons learned and Recommendations</p>	<p>4.1 What do we need to start, stop, continue or change during the remainder of the programme?</p>		<p>Review findings from responses to objectives 1-3</p> <p>Key stakeholder interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance group members MFAT officials MPI officials In-country partners – incl. senior leaders, working level representatives from biosecurity agencies Agricultural exporters Regional partners Australian govt Multilateral development agencies

Appendix C. Relevant source documents

Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership programme (phase 2)

Business Case. PDG Detailed Business Case for the Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership Activity 20211111

Costed Workplan 1 July 2023-30 June 2024

Fiji HTFA & Selected Pathway Assessments and Phytosanitary Certification Systems Workshop Itinerary 4-15 March 2024

MEL Framework. Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership (31 July 2022 version)

MPI Adviser/Senior Adviser Pacific Programme Position Description (February 2023)

MoU Phase 2 Enhanced Pacific Market Access Programme between MFAT and MPI (June/July 2022)

MTR Terms of Reference: Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership

Output 3 Scoping Report. SPC/MPI – EPMAP project, Fiji

Output 3 Scoping Report. SPC/MPI – EPMAP project, Tonga

Output 5 Workplan – PPPO Workplan completed activities

Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) Final Report, Cook Islands

Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) Final Report, Fiji

Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) Final Report, Samoa

Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) Final Report, Tonga

Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) Final Report, Vanuatu

Progress Report. Quarterly Progress Report: Enhanced Pacific Market Partnership. August 2023

Project Roadmap 2022-2026 and Theory of Change

Strengthening profitable use of existing pathways for fresh vegetables, fruit & cut flowers and foliage between five Pacific Island countries and New Zealand. Final Report – Cook Islands, 30 August 2023. MPI

Strengthening profitable use of existing pathways for fresh vegetables, fruit & cut flowers and foliage between five Pacific Island countries and New Zealand. Final Report – Samoa, 30 August 2023. MPI

Strengthening profitable use of existing pathways for fresh vegetables, fruit & cut flowers and foliage between five Pacific Island countries and New Zealand. Final Report – Tonga, 31 August 2023. MPI

Strengthening profitable use of existing pathways for fresh vegetables, fruit & cut flowers and foliage between five Pacific Island countries and New Zealand. Final Report – Vanuatu, 31 August 2023. MPI

Theory of Change. Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership

Training Needs Assessment of the Biosecurity Authority (NPPO) of Cook Islands. Draft Report, 18 September 2023. MPI

Training Needs Assessment of the Biosecurity Authority (NPPO) of Fiji. Draft Report, 19 September 2023. MPI

Training Needs Assessment of the Biosecurity Authority (NPPO) of Samoa. Draft Report, 19 September 2023. MPI

Training Needs Assessment of the Biosecurity Authority (NPPO) of Tonga. Draft Report, 18 September 2023. MPI

Training Needs Assessment of the Biosecurity Needs of Fiji, Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa and the Cook Islands. Project Update Memo, 20 September 2023. MPI

Training Needs Assessment of the Biosecurity Authority (NPPO) of Vanuatu. Draft Report, 11 September 2023. MPI

Appendix D. Organisations consulted

- Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Australia's Department of Agriculture
- Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)
- Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF)
- Biosecurity Vanuatu (BV)
- Cook Islands Ministry of Agriculture
- Fiji Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways
- Growers Federation of Tonga
- Lotopoha Export Trading
- Nature's Way
- New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade including High Commissions in Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu
- New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries
- Nishi Trading Limited
- Pacific Community (SPC)-LRD
- Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO)
- PACER Plus
- PHAMA Plus, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga
- Samoa Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF)
- Tonga Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests (MAFF)
- Tonga Ministry of Trade and Economic Development

Appendix E. Information sheet and consent form

Information sheet

Mid-term Review of the Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership programme

The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has commissioned Future Partners to undertake an independent Mid-term Review of the Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership (2022-2026) programme.

WHY is the initiative being reviewed?

The review objectives are:

Objective 1. To assess the extent to which the programme remains a priority for partner countries and NZ's International Development Cooperation Programme.

Objective 2. To examine the progress being made in achieving the outputs and outcomes of the programme.

Objective 3. To review the value of the programme.

Objective 4. Lessons learned for improvement – to identify the key learnings to increase positive impact in the future.

WHAT will the review entail?

A review of relevant documents, data, and key stakeholder interviews.

HOW can you contribute to the mid-term review?

You and other key stakeholders will be invited to meet the reviewers in person or via video conferencing. They will use an interview guide and focus on questions relevant to your role or connection with the programme.

Do you have to take part?

Participation in this mid-term review is voluntary.

You can agree to take part, but you still have the option to stop taking part at any time. However, your views and experiences are highly valuable to inform the review and remaining phase of the programme, **and we value your input.**

While your name and role will remain confidential to the reviewers, and you won't be identified in the reports, what you say may be used to inform the review findings. Your information will be used for this review only and by the Review Team.

WHO is conducting the review?

The mid-term review is being conducted by Aotearoa New Zealand consulting firm Future Partners Ltd. If you have any questions about the review, please contact either:

Kirsty Burnett, Future Partners Director, kirsty@futurepartners.co.nz +64210672680

Dr Elisabeth Poppelwell, voxpop@slingshot.co.nz +64274655192

Garth Atkinson, Technical Expert, gwsatkinson@gmail.com, +64 21365055

Bob Macfarlane, Technical Expert, scapanes@gmail.com +677 7531 285

Consent

I have read the information above, or it has been translated to me, and all my questions have been answered.

My responses can be used as part of the Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership Mid-term Review report.

I understand that I will not be identified in the report.

I agree to take part in an audio recorded interview. Yes No

I agree to take part in an unrecorded interview. Yes No

Name (print):
