

# MFAT Management Response to The Enhanced Pacific Biosecurity Partnership Programme Mid-term Review



Evaluation Report Recommendation	MFAT Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)
<p>Countries with more than one pest identification facility be encouraged to amalgamate them (We note this is outside the scope of the EPBP programme).</p>	<p><b>Reject.</b></p> <p>This recommendation sits outside the scope of the EPBP programme. While MPI can provide resourcing advice to Pacific biosecurity agencies, any decisions to amalgamate the facilities sits with its partners.</p>
<p>EPBP programme activities in Fiji be reviewed and adjusted to better fit needs, and any savings returned for distribution to other countries.</p>	<p><b>Partially agree.</b></p> <p>Capacity building for Fiji should be adjusted due to their existing capability and available resources.</p> <p>However, we also note that exotic pests and diseases could significantly impact Fiji's economy and the food and nutrition requirements of the country. Therefore, the programme will continue to provide support to Fiji in response to their requests. We do not envisage a significant redistribution of funding away from Fiji.</p>
<p>The EPBP MERL framework is re-assessed to determine if the outcomes, outputs, and activities remain relevant and revised where needed. Responsibility for operationalising is to be confirmed by the EPBP Governance Group.</p>	<p><b>Partially agree.</b></p> <p>MFAT will consider contracting in expertise to support MPI to operationalise the programme's MERL framework.</p> <p>We consider that the issues with MERL relate to resourcing, and disagree that the MERL framework needs to be re-assessed to determine if the outcomes, outputs and activities remain relevant. The midterm review report has already concluded that these components remain relevant.</p>

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There are issues in the governance and operational structure of EPBP that impact on implementation. It is timely to refresh the ToRs, so that the membership of the MPI/MFAT Governance Group and the scope of its mandate are discussed and agreed to.	<p><b>Partially agree.</b></p> <p>While MFAT does not have an issue with the existing MPI/MFAT governance structure (including its scope and membership), we note that MPI would like to make some changes. As a result, we are happy to consider refreshing the existing terms of reference alongside MPI.</p>
Plant health – Future EPBP programme activities emphasise national routine surveillance of plant pests and diseases in selected crops, and use organisms collected for training in identification.	<p><b>Agree.</b></p> <p>This is already a core part of the plant health and biosecurity component of the programme.</p>
Plant health – More emphasis be given to digitising all pest and disease records, existing and new (including interceptions on cargo etc.), to develop accurate and up-to-date lists of pests and diseases present in each country.	<p><b>Agree.</b></p> <p>National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPO) are responsible for informing other countries of their pest status. Records generated from crop surveys are stored on the Pacific Pest List Database (PLD) by NPPOs. While MPI should not carry out this work, they can provide support alongside SPC.</p>
Plant health – Mechanisms be developed for long-term support for fees associated with the validation of plant pest and disease identifications.	<p><b>Agree.</b></p> <p>Though we would note that the level of testing, through the programme, of Pacific plant samples at MPI's Plant Laboratory has been relatively minor. There is no formal system in place currently.</p>
Plant health – The potential use of DNA and barcode technology be examined as a potentially less expensive method of validating plant pest and disease identifications.	<p><b>Partially agree.</b></p> <p>This recommendation requires further exploration. Fiji is the only country that is using molecular techniques for identifications currently.</p>

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<p>Animal health – EPBP programme activities to emphasise national passive surveillance for animal diseases (through day-to-day frontline work of livestock officer/paravets and investigation of animal health events), and the specimens collected used for training in sample preparation, in-country screen testing, or overseas submission.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b></p>
<p>Animal health – Mechanisms be developed for long-term support for fees associated with the validation of animal disease identifications, especially as it relates to investigation of animal health events in the PICs.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b></p> <p>PICs lack laboratory capacity to test animal samples for important diseases. Consequently, there has been reliance on MPI and DAFF to conduct this testing in their labs. Regular testing is part of good surveillance and enables PICs to respond quickly should a disease outbreak be confirmed. MFAT is in discussions with MPI about the parameters for animal sample testing going forward.</p>
<p>The training of Pacific biosecurity border staff offshore in New Zealand needs to continue, but also with a new emphasis on in-country training to better fit the nature and scale of local operations, and thus be more relevant to the trainees.</p> <p>This in-country training would be led by seconded BNZ border officers supported by national biosecurity officers who have already received training in New Zealand (i.e. ‘train the trainers’). The duration of each in-country training course be dependent on the size of the agency, the number of international seaports and airports, and the volume of trade and numbers of passengers.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b></p> <p>Going forward, this work will be led by an MPI border expert in consultation with support from biosecurity officers in-country.</p>