

MFAT Management Response to The Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership Mid-term Review



Evaluation Report Recommendation	MFAT Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)
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.	<p>Agree.</p> <p>This can either be done through bilateral meetings between NZ and relevant PIC ministries, annual high-level consultations or during ministerial visits.</p>
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.	<p>Reject.</p> <p>While we agree with the importance of supporting value-added processing, it lies outside MPI's mandate as processed food products have minimal biosecurity requirements. There are a range of other existing NZ-funded initiatives that support value-added processing including the PHAMA Plus programme.</p>
Senior MPI and MFAT staff reaffirm Programme goals and objectives and the level of resourcing needed for each country.	<p>Agree.</p> <p>MFAT and MPI directors met in June 2024 to discuss the scope of the programme and its resourcing requirements. On scope, per the midterm review recommendation, we have agreed to focus the programme on Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu. We have also agreed to re-organise the programme around MPI's three workstreams (training, treatments and trade) and to reduce the budget size to reflect the reduced geographic scope.</p>
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.	<p>Agree.</p> <p>This will be supported by the annual meetings conducted between senior MFAT and MPI staff and heads of relevant PIC ministries to validate their ongoing commitment.</p>
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	<p>Reject.</p> <p>MFAT and MPI have agreed that the ePhyto work is no longer critical. Therefore, no further work will be undertaken on ePhyto.</p>

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<p>Import Health Standards are reviewed with the objective of adapting them to the PIC context where possible and without compromising their purpose.</p>	<p>Partially agree.</p> <p>MPI has transitioned from country specific Import Health Standards (IHS) to commodity specific IHS. MPI is supporting Pacific countries to meet the requirements set out in the IHS through the development of country specific export plans, standard operating procedures and overall improvements to each country's export assurance system.</p> <p>New IHS include a wider range of measures, including the introduction of a systems approach to manage biosecurity risks for some commodities. This may provide more opportunities for Pacific countries to meet the requirements in the future.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Partially agree.</p> <p>MFAT is comfortable with MPI's programme staffing structure going forward. This will include a FTE team leader role and three FTEs within the Pacific partnership team.</p>
<p>Programme Management works with other regional agencies to improve the national level of understanding of roles and responsibilities to strengthening market access pathways.</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>Coordination with other regional agencies has been a key part of the programme and will continue for the remainder of the programme.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>The PCE reports have already been reviewed and used by MPI to determine ongoing capacity development activities alongside engagement with National Plant Protection Organisations, farmers, exporters and regional partners. The PCE reports have been shared with other partners (including Australia's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)).</p>

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<p>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.</p>	<p>Partially agree.</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>
<p>Essential data for the MERL Framework is identified and surveys are conducted to collect information.</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>This recommendation can be addressed through the operationalisation of the MERL framework (see above).</p>
<p>A user-friendly database for the MERL Framework is established and maintained</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>This recommendation can be addressed through the operationalisation of the MERL framework (see above).</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Partially agree.</p> <p>While MFAT does not have an issue with the existing MPI/MFAT governance structure (including the scope of its mandate 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>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>This can be done as part of the refresh of the MPI/MFAT governance group terms of reference in consultation with governance group members.</p>

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Priority is given to facilitate the formation and operation of PIC governance groups, and membership could include private sector representation.	Partially agree. PIC governance groups have already been formed in each of the PICs. There are other forums in place to enable private sector representation.
The work plan for activities be updated in consultation with PIC agencies every quarter.	Partially agree. The workplan for activities should be updated regularly in consultation with PIC agencies. However, we consider that annual agreement on the work-plan combined with a semi-annual check-in with PIC agencies is sufficient.
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.	Agree. MPI travel to the Pacific is an essential requirement of this capacity building programme.
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.	Agree. A train the trainer approach will reduce the demands on the staff of PIC agencies to participate in capacity building workshops. It will also develop a cadre of well trained staff who can train their colleagues, improving sustainability.
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.	Partially agree. MPI is already coordinating with other delivery partners to reduce the risk of overlap and ensure that synergies can be enhanced.