

SPS Needs in the Pacific Islands

STDF/PG/133



Assessing phytosanitary needs in the Pacific Region

Increased migration and trade within the Pacific Community has raised the risk of pest and disease prevalence threatening agriculture, livelihood and fragile ecosystems. With few exceptions, island countries in the Pacific are small and under-resourced, with limited ability to implement International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) that provide the basis for safe trade in plants and plant products, and protection from unwanted plant pests.

Requested by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), this project helped 14 Pacific Island countries evaluate their capacity to implement international phytosanitary requirements using the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) Tool of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). The project assisted countries to understand what was needed to improve their phytosanitary services based on the identified needs.

Partners	National Plant Protection Organizations (Pacific Region) Pacific Plant Protection Organization Secretariat of the Pacific Community Food and Agriculture Organization International Plant Protection Convention
Start	August 2007
End	December 2009
Location	Southwest Pacific / Oceania
Budget	STDF contribution: US\$230,215 In-kind contribution: US\$57,430 Total cost: US\$287,645

Key Objective

Improve the capacity of the island countries of the Pacific Community to systematically evaluate the gaps in the application of phytosanitary measures through their plant protection and/or biosecurity services, and formulate measures to address them.

Project Achievements

Improved knowledge and skills to evaluate phytosanitary needs

Through the project, officials in the SPC and NPPOs in the region learned how to evaluate phytosanitary capacity needs using the PCE Tool. Over 150 experts participated in one regional training (Tonga, 2007) and a series of national workshops, significantly exceeding the targets set. Experts from French Polynesia, New Caledonia, and Wallis and Fatuna participated in the regional workshop with the support of SPC and the French Government. The involvement of officials from Australia and New Zealand helped to ensure that the findings would be considered in the design of bilateral interventions. These workshops played a key role in enhancing knowledge about the international framework for trade in plants and plant products, and strengthening relationships among plant health experts in the region.

Provided clarity and consensus on key phytosanitary capacity needs

Under the project, the IPPC's PCE Tool was applied in 14 countries (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu), significantly exceeding the six country target set. National PCE workshops enabled diverse public and private stakeholders with an interest in phytosanitary issues to discuss and identify phytosanitary capacity needs using the PCE Tool. Common needs focused on legal frameworks that were incompatible with the IPPC, weaknesses in export facilitation procedures and NPPO management capacity. In some cases, the evaluations pointed to relatively strong import controls, including import inspection and clearance procedures, and capacity to declare pest free areas. The SPC prepared a comparative analysis of the national PCE results, which was useful to identify common needs and opportunities for regional collaboration in capacity building. The project also stimulated use of the PCE Tool in French Polynesia, New Caledonia, and Wallis and Fatuna (with the financial support of SPC and France), which facilitated the participation of experts from these territories in SPC's targeted biosecurity training and regional inspector exchange programmes.

Supported targeted phytosanitary capacity development

The PCE results provided critical information for countries to improve their phytosanitary systems. An *ex post* evaluation in 2012 pointed to anecdotal evidence linking the project to improvements in phytosanitary services in some countries. For instance, Palau used its PCE results to develop an action strategy, which was instrumental in expediting the processes for enactment of national biosecurity laws. Fiji used the results to improve various aspects of its NPPO functions under the newly established Fiji Biosecurity Authority. The evaluation also indicated that the PCE results were used to inform the design of subsequent interventions at both the national and regional level. In particular, the SPC used the PCE findings to provide guidance to agriculture and forestry ministers, and other high-level policy-makers, on the harmonization of biosecurity laws in the region. The results were also used to inform the design of the regional Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access (PHAMA) project, funded by AusAID.

Actively use the PCE results to target capacity building activities

The results of the PCE Tool provide indispensable information and analysis to improve the targeting of technical cooperation activities. Yet, given their sensitivity, PCE results are sometimes not easily accessible to development partners and donors. Prior to use of the PCE Tool, it is recommended that those involved agree on who will control the results, how they will be used and who will have access.

Re-visit the findings of SPS needs assessments and monitor follow-up

Using the PCE Tool raises awareness about phytosanitary weaknesses, and how to be address them. Follow-up activities are key to target the key weaknesses identified. Ongoing monitoring is also important to understand to what extent interventions planned on the basis of the PCE results are successful, and to identify other emerging needs. The IPPC recommends that the PCE is re-applied every four to five years. In cases where follow-up interventions are limited, a "simpler" follow-up assessment may be appropriate to maintain SPS awareness and re-engage stakeholders in activities to address critical SPS issues affecting trade in plants and plant products.

Focus on continuity and sustainability

Experiences in this project highlighted the necessity of long-term commitment to enhance phytosanitary capacity. Establishing and operating effective phytosanitary services is a long-term undertaking. National governments should ensure long-term funding for core staff, rather than relying on short-term project funding, and commit to genuine collaboration with the private sector. Technical cooperation activities should be designed and delivered in a way that ensures that the results are sustainable beyond the end of individual projects.

Focus on specific phytosanitary constraints affecting particular exports

The *ex post* evaluation observed that projects often focus on strengthening the overall capacity of phytosanitary services with the expectation that this will contribute to increased exports of a broad range of products. To achieve clear economic benefits within a shorter timeframe and provide useful evidence to support fund-raising, the *ex post* evaluation proposed consideration of an alternative approach, focused on particular phytosanitary issues affecting the export of specific products. This approach implies a value chain focus with attention to all aspects of production, certification and export. It is also similar to the approach in the STDF Multi Criteria Decision Analysis framework, which identifies SPS capacity building options (investments) on the basis of specific SPS issues affecting particular agri-food exports to particular markets.

Additional Resources

[Project Termination Report](#)

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