

Independent evaluation of the Pacific Biosecurity Partnerships Program agreement

Final Report to the Australian Government Department of
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

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April 2026



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Glossary

Abbreviation Stands for

AFAS	Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme	ODA	Official Development Assistance
BSI	Biosecurity Solomon Islands	OECD DAC	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation	PACER Plus	Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Australia	PBPP	Pacific Biosecurity Partnerships Program,
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia	PEP	Pacific Export Pathways
EOPOs	End-of-Program Outcomes	PHAMA Plus	Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Plus Program
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group	PHOVAPS	Pacific Heads of Veterinary and Production Services
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations	PICs	Pacific Island Countries (and Territories)
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion	PLD	Pacific Islands Pest List Database
GeNS	Generic ePhyto National System	PNG	Papua New Guinea
ICC	In-Country Coordinator	PPPO	Pacific Plant Protection Organisation
KEQs	Key Evaluation Questions	SAFE Pacific	Safe Agricultural Trade Facilitation through Economic Integration in the Pacific
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention	SIBDP	Solomon Islands Biosecurity Development Program (Phase 3)
MAL	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Solomon Islands	SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	SPC	The Pacific Community, formerly the Secretariat for the Pacific Community and prior to that the South Pacific Commission
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand	SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding	The Programs	The PBPP and SIBDP Phase 3
MPI	Ministry for Primary Industries, New Zealand	WOAH	World Organisation for Animal Health
NAQIA	National Agriculture & Quarantine Inspection Authority, PNG		
NPPO	National Plant Protection Organisations		

Executive summary

Programs in scope

This evaluation considers two related Australian Government biosecurity partnership programs focused on the Pacific funded through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and delivered through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF):

- **Pacific Biosecurity Partnerships Program (PBPP)** supporting development of regional (multi-lateral) biosecurity capacity across Pacific Island Countries (PICs)
 - PBPP has a broad reach across multiple countries and, having been established in April 2020, is relatively new. The program broadly covers three streams:
 1. regional trade and market access support (e.g. regional electronic systems, export pathway training, action of regional trade issues)
 2. regional biosecurity development support (e.g. border and operational training and resources), and
 3. regional stakeholder engagement and communications.
 - The evaluation period in this report covers the nearly six-years from its establishment to October 2025.
- **Solomon Islands Biosecurity Development Program (SIBDP) Phase 3**, a bilateral program focused on strengthening the Solomon Islands biosecurity system
 - Principally though technical, operational and other support to Biosecurity Solomon Islands (BSI) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL).
 - SIBDP has been a longer-term partnership with a specific high-need/high-engagement country, the first phase of which began in 2013.
 - The evaluation period covers the nearly four years from Phase 3's commencement in December 2021 to October 2025.

The Programs are functionally separate but are delivered through the same DAFF team. They are being evaluated together because they are both biosecurity related, have areas of cross-over in relation to the Solomon Islands, and are administered through DAFF under the same agreement (PBPP Agreement).

Methods employed and key limitations

This independent evaluation was designed and executed in accordance with DFAT's Design and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Standards (2023).

The evaluation focuses on core matters of effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability:

1. *Effectiveness*: Are programs funded under the PBPP agreement (PBPP and SIBDP) effective in progressing towards overarching end-of-program outcomes (EOPOs)?
2. *Efficiency*: Did the investments make appropriate and efficient use of Australia's and our partners' time and resources to achieve intended outcomes?
3. *Sustainability*: To what extent have the PBPP and SIBDP contributed to the development of sustainable improvements in the biosecurity system, market access and trade capability in the Pacific region?

The evaluation's mixed methods analysis applies a combination of primary and secondary sources: desktop data review, semi-structured interviews with 35 key internal and external stakeholders in Australia and across the Pacific, and complementary qualitative observation through short visits to each of Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and in Samoa.

Key limitations to this evaluation include: that assessment and attribution of outcomes is based on qualitative synthesis rather than experimental approaches, that the evaluation is limited through the time (three months to draft report) and budget available, that stakeholder-sourced evidence was further limited by individual availability and knowledge of activities delivered up to five years in the past, that mixed delivery and co-funding for program-related activities complicates program attribution, and that desktop and other evidence did not indicate a clear baseline. All are common with evaluations in a development context and do not significantly constrain findings.

A DAFF-DFAT Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) approved the evaluation Terms of Reference, and subsequent Evaluation Plan, in September 2025 and has provided contextual and strategic input throughout.

Key findings on effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability

The PBPP, over six years to the 2024-25 financial year, has been allocated \$3.0 million from DFAT Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding plus at least \$1.2 million in DAFF in-kind staffing resources. The SIBDP Phase 3 has cost \$2.8 million over four years to 2024-25, also DFAT-funded, plus around \$0.7 million in DAFF in-kind staffing.

Outputs for both Programs have included a wide mix of strategy development, operational training, workshops, equipment provision, and other bespoke activities.

DFAT funding was primarily directed towards knowledge-building on import expectations (Pacific Export Pathways training), Generic ePhyto systems, and Pacific Islands Pest List Database (PLD) upgrades, whereas DAFF provided in-kind resources to support sea container activities, plant pest surveillance, animal technical support and program management.

Table 1 summaries our high-level conclusions with respect to the Key Evaluation Questions, with further detail and supporting evidence following.

Table 1: High-level summary of conclusions with respect to Key Evaluation Questions

Key Evaluation Questions	Summary Findings
Effectiveness: Were programs funded under the PBPP Agreement (PBPP and SIBDP) effective in achieving overarching EOPOs?	Mostly effective – Consistent and strong evidence of activities which Pacific stakeholders engaged with, supported and valued, resulting in strengthened relationships and incrementally improving capacity. Strengthening biosecurity systems is best understood as a process of continuous improvement in a changing context. The conditions have been laid for this to continue.
Efficiency: Did the investments make appropriate and efficient use of Australia's and our partners' time and resources to achieve intended outcomes?	Mostly efficient – Evidence of planning and value-for-money considerations, and a flexible approach in line with practical realities like delays. Leveraged in-kind contributions from DAFF, and utilised partner co-funding.
Sustainability: To what extent have the PBPP and SIBDP contributed to the development of sustainable improvements in the biosecurity system, market access and trade capability in the Pacific region?	Somewhat sustainable – Many positive steps made (e.g. train-the-trainer approaches, upholding of regional systems), but more could be done to integrate sustainability into program planning (especially for SIBDP).
Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI): How has PBPP and SIBDP advanced inclusive development?	Mostly indirect and with no clear impact – While not the primary focus, program activities have included female and rural participants in ways appropriate for the context. With no clear articulation of the main gender, disability or other inequities to be addressed, the Programs' overall impact on inclusive development is unclear.
Climate Change: How has PBPP and SIBDP supported partners to address climate change?	Mostly indirect but with impact – While not the primary focus, the Programs are supporting Pacific biosecurity and agriculture stakeholders adapt to climate change effects on pests and diseases and their management.
Identifying Key Insights and Lessons Learned	Key barriers and challenges relate to Pacific countries' resourcing, advanced capabilities and consistent implementation of management and technical systems, and designing where Australian support can best add value now while fostering sustainability. Recommendations relate to regional coordination, designing program intent and focus, better understanding program performance, and special issues for embedding regional technology.

In relation to PBPP, key findings relevant to effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability include:

- There is consistent and strong evidence of strengthened relationships between Pacific biosecurity agencies (National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPOs)) and Australian agencies. Strategic coordination between Australia/New Zealand/regional programs (such as Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Plus Program Plus (PHAMA Plus)) and regional institutions (such as the Pacific Community (SPC), Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO) and others) has improved but challenges remain.
- PIC biosecurity officials consulted (from Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Samoa, Fiji) strongly endorsed the Programs, as did biosecurity officials from New Zealand.
- Gaps in regional biosecurity measures that the PBPP has contributed to addressing, and opportunities it promoted, have included:
 - improved formal surveillance and pest status updates in Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, and Solomon Islands that meet international standards, with additional opportunities remaining to further promote passive (e.g. farmer-led) surveillance.
 - progress on regional standards and systems (e.g. container hygiene, ePhyto, PLD).
 - new and refined Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for inspections, market access protocols, and trade pathways (e.g. taro from Samoa and Cook Islands, Tahitian lime from Vanuatu, containerised goods).
 - a wide range of training and similar skills development with good uptake and feedback on content.
- Areas with weaker program impacts often related to technology adoption challenges: with low country readiness for ePhyto; and PLD efforts under-utilised.
- PBPP has leveraged significant in-kind contributions from DAFF technical, operational and program management areas – and would not be feasible without this, absent further funding. Effective use was made of partner co-planning and co-funding.
- The cycle of annual program planning and budgeting is often not fit-for-purpose, with delivery lagging due to internal and external factors. Program administration has probably become more complex over time. Further, short-term and unaligned funding cycles (for DAFF, DFAT and SPC) hinder long-term planning.
- While there has been considerable effort made to reduce duplication, donor activities continue to overlap in some areas such as training, technical support and country engagement. This appears to be due to blurred roles between SPC and programs run out of Australia and New Zealand, and multiple programs operating simultaneously.
- Many positive steps towards sustainability in program design were observed, although more could be done. Positive steps include recognising and upholding Pacific relationships; the flexibility shown; some use of a train-the-trainer approach; and focus on regional systems such as towards a PPPO regional strategy for container pathways and harmonisation.

- Various improvements appear vulnerable to being slowed down or weakened over time in some countries, especially without continued external support. For example, continued support in some form is likely needed to ensure that the use-case for the PLD is clear for stakeholders, and to ensure validated and standardised laboratory and diagnostic procedures remain present in the region (even if remote diagnostics is the primary means of identification).

In relation to SIBDP Phase 3, key findings relevant to effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability include:

- SIBDP while modest in scale is highly regarded and highly valued by local stakeholders, including BSI and MAL.
- An ongoing, embedded DAFF official (or semi-embedded group of officials) is an innovative response. The culturally sensitive and flexible approach taken across Phase 3 supports trust, access and influence with local stakeholders at various levels. This includes managing the difficult balance between reacting to urgent demands or preferences and helping agencies address critical capacity to deliver core biosecurity functions.
- Biosecurity in Solomon Islands, including agency capacity, is likely stronger due to SIBDP Phase 3. The partnership is credited with lifting capability, strengthening governance culture and staff engagement, and improving coordination between border agencies. A wide range of appropriate training with good participation has been particularly notable. SIBDP Phase 3 effectively supported the preparation for the Pacific Games and this workstream is complete, with lessons available to be applied to future Pacific Games like Tahiti, 2027.
- Solomon Islands biosecurity functions remain relatively fragile in their systemic capacity, with reasonable technical competence but many strategic and day-to-day challenges including infrastructure constraints, limited scale and geographic coverage of staff, and under-developed management systems.
- The same general findings related to efficiency for PBPP also apply to SIBDP Phase 3.

For both Programs, regarding GEDSI and climate change:

- While GEDSI was not a primary focus, planning for training activities recognised gender inclusivity factors. Stakeholders feel the Programs are inclusive of the right stakeholders and respectful of partner governments.
- Climate change adaptation underpins needs for biosecurity: for example, impacts of climate change on plant health and plant production were a significant driver for the PBPP plant pest surveillance project with Cook Islands, Samoa and Tonga.

Together, the Programs have demonstrated tangible results in strengthening biosecurity systems across participating countries, while responsive to evolving regional needs. Each of the intermediate outcomes (below) are being achieved, overall, albeit with varying success across projects and some contention about the pace and sustainability of change.

Table 2: Summary assessment of achievement with respect to program intermediate outcomes

Intermediate outcomes	Aligned to	Summary Assessment
Gaps identified and addressed to foster Pacific NPPOs' consistent and harmonised biosecurity measures across the region	PBPP	 Seedling – good progress towards being effective Current activities are improving biosecurity across the Pacific, but gaps in appropriately consistent biosecurity remain. Informal approaches to activity prioritisation reduces the certainty that program activities target and address the most critical matters.
Pacific regional trade and market access opportunities promoted, and clean & compliant plant product trade facilitated	PBPP	 Growing – greater progress, with strong signs of effectiveness but more to achieve and sustain Constructive progress on a focused range of foundational trade knowledge and market access matters, albeit with flow-on trade outcomes still to be observed or measured.
Effective communication, engagement, collaboration & coordination with regional programs and partners	PBPP	 Growing – greater progress, with strong signs of effectiveness but more to achieve and sustain Clearer communication channels and collaborative working across programs and partners, with opportunities for greater focus on relative roles.
Stronger BSI and MAL capacity to deliver core biosecurity functions effectively	SIBDP	 Seedling – good progress towards being effective Agency capacity is likely stronger, across capability, governance, staff engagement and agency coordination – but many challenges remain.
Assisted management of biosecurity risks associated with anticipated infrastructure development & 2023 Pacific Games preparations	SIBDP	 Harvesting – fully effective or intent achieved Activities complete with positive reflections from stakeholders, with respect to Games preparations.

Through this, both Programs are making steady and reasonable progress towards each of the three EOPOs, focused on PIC country relationships, international aid programs promoting agriculture sector stability, growth and trade; and biosecurity standards and improvement.

The Programs remain highly relevant to the strategic priorities of DFAT, DAFF, and Pacific partner countries, with objectives that align closely with regional biosecurity challenges and broader development goals.

The conditions have been laid for impacts to continue. Challenges remain, particularly on further effectiveness beyond 'easy wins' and sustainability of impact.

Lessons learned and recommendations

The evaluation highlighted some key lessons with a view to maintaining and enhancing the Programs' effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, outlined below. Specific recommendations resulting from evaluation findings follow (Table 3), in no order of priority.

Regional coordination challenges and opportunities

- Relationships between DAFF and its partners are functional, and DAFF's readiness to engage and keenness to help has been noticed and acknowledged. While regional communication has improved since PBPP's inception (and similarly with Solomon Islands through SIBDP), a sharper focus on what is being offered to the agriculture and biosecurity regulatory systems in the Pacific by Australia – and why – may aid clarity.
- Stakeholders noted better recent coordination between Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus (PACER Plus), PHAMA Plus, DAFF and New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), and funders DFAT and New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand (MFAT). More could be done to avoid unnecessary or unhelpful duplication in PIC or regional development support across donors or other bodies. Particular attention could be given to overlaps in agricultural, horticultural or export-focussed training delivered or sponsored by SPC, New Zealand and Australia.
- As PBPP matures, more multi-year, multi-country, multi-funder activities might be expected, ideally with shared oversight and reporting. Concurrently, the long-term capacity of SPC in the biosecurity space needs addressing if it is to fulfil its role providing regional technical services and support.
- Further attention could be given to removing administrative obstacles to contracting non-Australian entities and streamlining project agreements.

Designing program intent and focus

- Both PBPP and SIBDP need to be more strategic towards authentic opportunities for successful system improvement; potentially with reference to a more explicit and transparent framework of how developed the biosecurity/regulatory system is in each PIC or grouping of PICs. This may assist structured conversations or assessments about strengths and weaknesses, where improvements have been made, relative priorities for improvement interventions, and strategies for exit or evolution. Such a process does not need to be highly elaborate.
- Stakeholders sometimes vary in their informal perceptions of program success. There are opportunities to update and hone the program logic (theory of change) and expression of outcomes, and for this to flow through to program planning. A more explicit outcome of greater PIC biosecurity agency capability (or maturity or sustainability) would emphasise paths for PICs to better manage risks on their own as critical to project design.
- In Pacific contexts, change initiatives are more likely to gain traction when they build on existing cultural and political relationships. The programs should continue to focus on trusted relationships and be cautious about uniform, untailored regional approaches. This suggests

also prioritising peer-to-peer learning and South-South learning and institutional partnerships.

- DAFF could potentially better design program activities if activity budgets (or at least, a minimum budget envelope) were confirmed on a rolling two-year basis (or more), as opposed to year-by-year. This should be feasible within DFAT program management and governance cycle. More rigorous design and planning about how program activities can build legacy and sustainability could also be pursued.

Better understanding program performance

- Current activity and annual reports are informative, but have weak alignment to the theory of change and are limited in insight on progress towards outcomes and sustainable change.
- A focus on outcomes is important for communication, partnerships and to guide challenging decisions. Ongoing stakeholder dialogue about what the program is genuinely achieving, and why, should be baked-into program processes.
- Monitoring and evaluation should be proportionate to program resources.
- As Pacific biosecurity-related programs enter a new phase, it is time for the GEDSI analysis to be updated in line with the DFAT GEDSI analysis good practice note.¹

Special issues for regional technology activities

- Regional technology activities are lagging due to limited PIC uptake, with care needed for next steps. While offering the potential for substantial benefits, more attention needs to be applied to the practical conditions for and enablers of use in agencies and beyond – and for any further investment to be better linked to stages of readiness and supporting needs.

Table 3: List of recommendations

#	Recommendation
#1	Continue to engage with PIC governments, SPC, New Zealand and other donors/programs about regional strategies for biosecurity and best uses of available resources for collective impact
#2	Monitoring could include introducing a biosecurity agency 'maturity model' or similar, appropriate to the Pacific, to more transparently and objectively identify local or regional needs and assess the extent of change over time. A maturity model could help with intervention planning, training needs assessments and assessments of rapid response systems.
#3	If resourcing stays similar to current levels, PBPP (and potentially SIBDP) should be clearer that it is only able to offer a narrow portfolio of projects, what those projects are, and what Australia's interest is in them.

¹ DFAT (2022), Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Analysis Good Practice Note, October 2023.

#	Recommendation
#4	Contingent on resources, continue to uphold relationship-building as a core priority for the Programs, but with more specificity about the role of South-to-South partnerships, technical exchanges, joint assessments and Australia's role in those partnerships.
#5	Establish a clear and proportionate monitoring and evaluation plan for future Pacific biosecurity partnering or participation that applies the DFAT Design and MEL Standards and the GEDSI Analysis Good Practice Note. EOPOs should also be better expressed in the form of 'end states' than the current set.
#6	Before investing further in regional electronic systems-related work (e.g. ePhyto or Pest List Database), review whether complementary 'soft' activities (people- and process- focussed) are required to realise timely benefits.

1. Introduction and context

1.1 Program context

Agriculture as development driver

Economic development and growth in the Pacific faces several constraints, including distance from major markets, limited land and resources, dispersed populations, and environmental vulnerability. Australia seeks close economic ties within the region, recognising that partnerships between governments of Pacific Island Countries (PICs)² and Australia are essential for the Pacific's long-term prosperity.

Agriculture is central to sustainable and inclusive growth, providing the main source of income and livelihood for most Pacific communities. PICs face the dual task of generating sufficient incomes to alleviate poverty while also ensuring adequate, nutritious food supplies for expanding populations. Pacific agricultural exports to Australia, New Zealand, other Pacific countries, and beyond, is seen as a key driver of potential growth and regional economic integration.

Biosecurity challenges

However, as trade and mobility increase across the Pacific, so too does the risk of invasive pests and diseases, which can reduce agricultural productivity and constrain cost-effective access to international markets, as well as have other negative impacts on the environment or amenity.

PIC biosecurity agencies are tasked with preventing, responding to and managing biosecurity threats, with both border and post-border responsibilities. Biosecurity risks are increasing, becoming more complex and harder to manage; the rising number of serious plant and animal biosecurity risks is placing greater pressure on regional and national authorities to respond effectively. Capability and capacity of Pacific biosecurity agencies vary significantly across the region, in line with wider public resources and public administration maturity across countries.

The extent to which Pacific countries need assistance with market access issues also varies with their agricultural industries' current and future ability and intent to export produce. For example, in Vanuatu, validation of disease-free status (e.g. foot-and-mouth disease) protects beef exports. In countries with few exports, market access is not a driving concern, but biosecurity still supports the livelihoods of small-scale crop-growers or other smallholder farmers.

In short, effective Pacific agricultural and food production and trade requires robust and functioning biosecurity systems. These systems are also essential to allow the safe movement of humanitarian food assistance in the event of disaster.

Institutional context and Australian Government positioning

² Sometimes also referred to as Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). We use PICs for internal consistency and simplicity.

Australia, with its advanced biosecurity knowledge and experience, is well-placed to consolidate and further strengthen relationships with Pacific biosecurity agencies and regional institutions, to both support Pacific development and to reduce risk to Australia and the region.

With respect to roles of Australian Government departments, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) drives Australia's general regional and bilateral policy agenda, whereas the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) provides technical and operational support to implement sectoral policies and international standards.

DAFF-led approaches

Engagement, collaboration and cooperation between biosecurity agencies are key enablers for a strong regional biosecurity system. This context underpins Australia's *National Biosecurity Strategy 2022-2032* agreed by Ministers nationally under the National Biosecurity Committee³, DAFF's *Pacific Biosecurity Strategy 2022 to 2027*⁴ and the *DAFF Biosecurity 2030 Roadmap* (2024)⁵.

For example, the *Biosecurity 2030 Roadmap* includes the strategic action, "Increase partnership activities with our near-neighbours" which provides for DAFF to support Pacific countries to build their pest and disease surveillance, preparedness and response capability. The *Pacific Biosecurity Strategy 2022 to 2027* addresses the strategic actions set out in the 2030 Roadmap. It provides for DAFF to increase and expand its support and leadership on biosecurity issues in the region, including through partnership activities with near neighbours.

Current ongoing DAFF functions which involve Pacific engagement, alongside the programs in scope for this evaluation (see section 1.2), include the Pacific Engagement Program for Animal Health (PEPAH), Pacific Engagement and International Plant Health (PEIPH) and others.⁶

DFAT-led approaches

These priorities have also been reflected in the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus development-focused trade agreement established in 2020⁷, led for Australia by DFAT. Australia is also supporting the second phase of the Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Program (PHAMA Plus) offering targeted assistance to improve market access, concluding in June 2026.⁸

³ See: <https://www.biosecurity.gov.au/about/national-biosecurity-committee/nbs>

⁴ See: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/pacific-biosecurity-strategy.pdf>

⁵ See: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/policy/biosecurity-2030-roadmap>

⁶ See: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/policy/australia/public-awareness/pacific-engagement/inside-department>

⁷ See: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/agreements/in-force/pacer/pacific-agreement-on-closer-economic-relations-plus> and <https://pacerplus.org/>. Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Niue, Vanuatu and Cook Islands are Parties, with Nauru signed by not ratified. Component 3 of the PACER Plus agreement (SPS measures) seeks to help build the capacity of Quarantine and Biosecurity agencies responsible for the implementation of SPS policies and procedures. These measures are funded by both Australia and New Zealand.

⁸ <https://phamaplus.com.au>. Focuses on market access by developing the public and private sectors' capacity to meet market requirements, and on gaining access for novel agricultural-based products into new markets. PHAMA also aids in meeting export regulations, such as compliance with international food safety standards.

Australia's wider focus in the Pacific is also reflected through regional⁹ and bilateral Development Partnership Plans. This includes the *Australia – Solomon Islands Development Partnership Plan 2024–2029*, complemented in the agriculture context by the Australian Government's three-year \$9.5 million Solomon Islands Climate Resilient Agriculture Development Program announced in late 2025 to strengthen agricultural productivity, resilience, and inclusivity amid growing climate risks.

Wider institutional context and complementary programs

As well as Pacific Biosecurity agencies, the wider institutional context for strengthening biosecurity in the Pacific region includes:

- **Regional bodies:** Pacific Community (SPC), Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO) and Pacific Heads of Veterinary and Production Services (PHOVAPS).
 - SPC provides secretariat support to PPPO and PHOVAPS, and delivers capacity building and technical support to national biosecurity authorities, as well as information management and coordination on biosecurity matters.
 - The PPPO supports the harmonisation of phytosanitary measures, fosters co-operation in plant protection and other phytosanitary matters between members and countries and organisations outside the Pacific region.
 - PHOVAPS seeks to strengthen animal health and production systems through advocacy and policy strengthening, resource mobilisation and partnerships, research and development and information provision.
- **Multi-lateral programs:** include Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus (PACER Plus), PHAMA Plus and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat's Pacific Trade Invest. PHAMA Plus and DAFF have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), setting out how they will work together to facilitate PIC compliance with regulations that govern the trade of agricultural and primary products.¹⁰
- **Further Australian Government bodies or programs** include research-for-development agency Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research.¹¹ and national science agency Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).¹²
- **Other non-Australian institutions:** include efforts of New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).¹³, the European Union-funded and SPC-delivered Safe Agricultural Trade Facilitation through Economic Integration in

⁹ See: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/development/australia-pacific-regional-development-partnership-plan-2025-2029>

¹⁰ MoU THE06 between PHAMA Plus and Commonwealth of Australia as represented by DAFF, 6 Oct 2021 to 30 Jun 2026.

¹¹ See: <https://www.aciar.gov.au/>

¹² See: <https://www.csiro.au/en/research/natural-environment/biosecurity>

¹³ The New Zealand Government programs include its Enhanced Pacific Biosecurity Partnership Programme and Enhanced Pacific Market Access Programme.

the Pacific (SAFE Pacific), and multiple other international donors including several Asian countries' increasing bilateral engagement with the Pacific.¹⁴

1.2 The programs in scope

This evaluation looks at two Australian Government biosecurity partnership programs of DFAT and DAFF, established in response to growing biosecurity threats in the Pacific region and the Australian Government's priorities in the Pacific.

The Programs aim to promote and enhance bilateral and regional cooperation and coordination to respond to biosecurity threats that may impact Pacific livelihoods and economic stability.

1. **The Pacific Biosecurity Partnerships Program**¹⁵ or "PBPP". The PBPP delivers a suite of biosecurity-related activities in PICs and on a Pacific regional basis, encompassing technical support, regional trade and market access support, and stakeholder engagement and communications; and
2. **The Solomon Islands Biosecurity Development Program** or "SIBDP" Phase 3, focused on strengthening the Solomon Islands biosecurity system.

DFAT's funder role, is overseen by its Office of the Pacific division for PBPP and by the DFAT Post in Solomon Islands for SIBDP. **DAFF's implementation role** includes its International Capacity Development Section administering the programs, with further areas across DAFF supporting specialist activities like pest surveillance.

The scope of this evaluation relates to PBPP from its establishment in April 2020 to October 2025, and SIBDP Phase 3 from December 2021 to October 2025. Both partnerships are currently funded to continue to the end of the 2026-27 financial year.

The evaluation considers the breadth of the programs including overarching activities and all PICs covered or intended to be covered. Out of direct scope are: the earlier Phases 1& 2 of SIBDP; other DAFF programs and projects; and other agricultural and biosecurity programs (except in relation to the partnership and collaboration interface with the programs in scope).

Program design and structure

PBPP is largely regional or multi-lateral, with elements of targeting to specific PICs such as Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa and Fiji. SIBDP Phase 3 (hereafter mostly just called SIBDP for short) is a bilateral program with the Solomon Islands. While the composition and structure of the Programs' activities have varied over time, these activities can be broadly described across four activity streams:

¹⁴ For example, increased bilateral activity between the Solomon Islands and China in relation to agriculture and aspects of biosecurity over recent years, such as the week-long China–Solomon Islands Agritech Workshop in July 2025 following the July 2024 MoU between the Solomon Islands Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) and the Jiangsu Academy of Agricultural Sciences. See: <https://solomons.gov.sb/solomon-islands-and-china-launch-agritech-workshop-to-boost-agricultural-innovation-and-cooperation/>

¹⁵ Established under Activity Schedule 88 to the Record of Understanding No. 13848 between DFAT and a predecessor to DAFF, dated March 2020, and subsequent variations.

1. *Regional Trade and Market Access Support* – key elements include market access support (including for chillies, breadfruit and taro), export pathway training, the promotion of clean sea container practices, and support for regional electronic systems.
2. *Regional Biosecurity Development Support* – with key elements include development of regional biosecurity border training resources, and delivery of biosecurity border operational and technical training.
3. *Regional Stakeholder Engagement and Communications* – key elements include implementation of a regional biosecurity and agriculture communications strategy and wider DAFF participation in priority regional meetings and workshops.
4. *SIBDP Phase 3* (from December 2021) – key elements include technical, operational and strategy & governance support to Biosecurity Solomon Islands (BSI) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL). A key difference in SIBDP relative to other program streams is more direct coordination from outposted DAFF official(s) in-country, with the bilateral focus also informed by the DFAT Post in Solomon Islands.

See section 3 and Appendix E for further details of these activities, including their phasing over time. Section 3.1 discusses specific activities and outputs under the programs, and the PICs they relate to.

The PBPP, over six years 2019-20 to 2024-25, has been allocated \$3.0 million from DFAT Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding plus at least \$1.2 million in DAFF in-kind staffing resources. The SIBDP Phase 3 has cost \$2.8 million over four years 2021-22 to 2024-25, also DFAT-funded, plus around \$0.7 million in DAFF in-kind staffing. Cumulative expenditure to September 2025 has been a little less than budget (see section 4 for detail). Further DFAT funding has been budgeted for the Programs in 2025-26 and 2026-27.

Several elements have been **co-funded**, so not exclusively a Program activity. For example:

- PBPP activities also supported by PHAMA Plus and PACER Plus include accreditation for selected export facilities and animal and plant health surveys to support market access.
- SAFE Pacific and New Zealand's MPI co-invested in workshops for regional Pest List Database (PLD) upgrades alongside PBPP.¹⁶

Intended program outcomes

Foundational governance, strategy and planning documents including the Record of Understanding between DFAT and DAFF in relation to the PBPP, and the communication strategy developed in the early stages of the Programs¹⁷, broadly describe program intent. However, a formal program logic was not developed at program establishment.

¹⁶ The Pacific Community. (2023, June 1). The Pacific Community rolls out upgraded Pacific Pest List Database [Media release]. The Pacific Community. <https://www.spc.int/updates/news/media-release/2023/06/the-pacific-community-rolls-out-upgraded-pacific-pest-list>

¹⁷ Dunn, J., McPhillips, K., Quashie-Williams, C., Gare, P., & Housego, N. (2020). Partnering with our Pacific neighbours: Communication and engagement strategy. DAFF.

To support this evaluation, Sapere developed a program logic (Figure 1, also at Appendix B) in collaboration with the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) (see section 2). To best align to program intent, we designed the end-of-program and intermediate outcomes in the program logic to, where feasible, reflect then-contemporary language in the programs' existing governance and early strategy and planning documents.¹⁸

The program logic's **end of program outcomes (EOPOs)** are:

- Continue to build and maintain PIC relationships that support Australia's international objectives by helping to promote agriculture sector stability, growth and trade.
- Support DFAT to deliver international aid programs with agricultural (trade, livelihood and food security) objectives.
- Work with PICs to implement regional and international programs and systems to improve global biosecurity standards or standardise regulation.

Supporting these EOPOs are five **intermediate outcomes**. The first three particularly relate to PBPP and the latter two are SIBDP-specific:

- Gaps identified and addressed to foster Pacific National Plant Protection Organisations' (NPPOs') consistent and harmonised biosecurity measures across the region.
- Pacific regional trade and market access opportunities promoted, and clean & compliant plant product trade facilitated.
- Effective communication, engagement, collaboration & coordination with regional programs and partners.
- Stronger BSI and MAL capacity to deliver core biosecurity functions effectively.
- Assisted management of biosecurity risks associated with anticipated [Solomon Islands] infrastructure development & 2023 Pacific Games preparations.

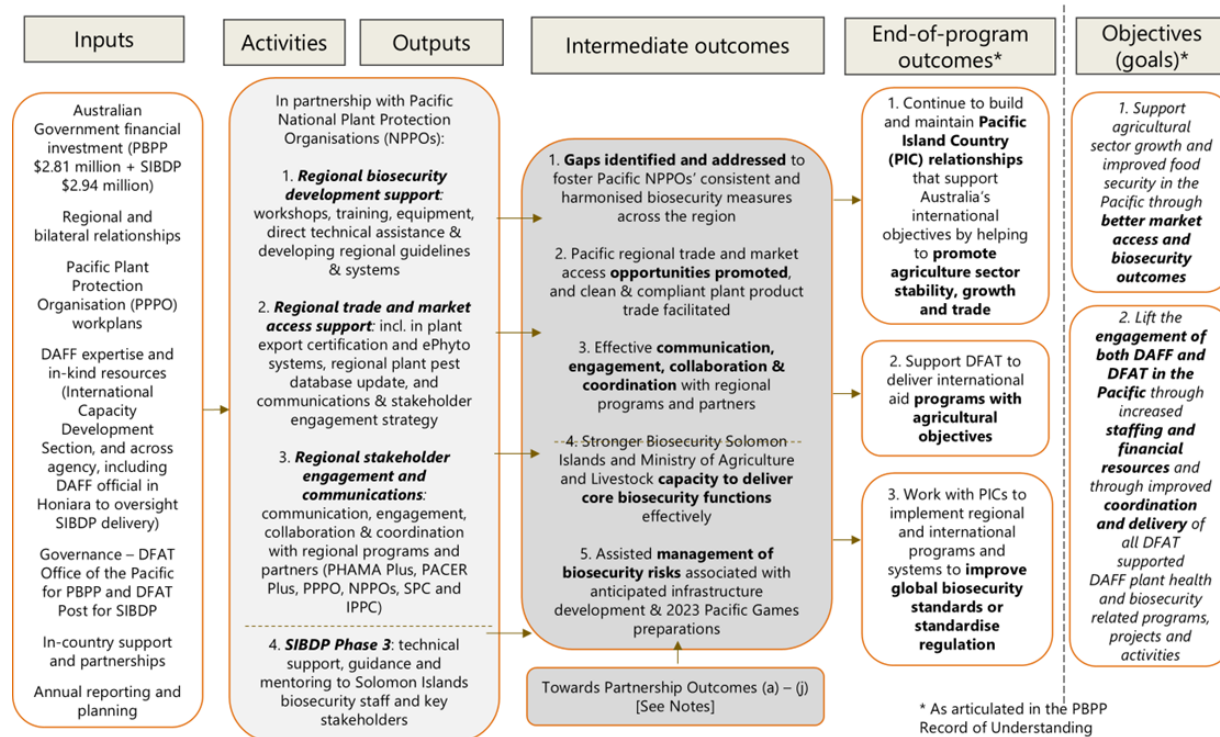
¹⁸ That is, the stated intended outcomes are not a retrospective fully original description of program intent.

Figure 1: Agreed program logic

Program logic

Pacific Biosecurity Partnership Program (PBPP) (Jan 2020 to October 2025)

Solomon Islands Biosecurity Development Program (SIBDP) phase 3 (January 2022 to June 2025)



2. Evaluation methods

2.1 Purpose and evaluation questions

This evaluation was designed and executed in accordance with DFAT's Design and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Standards (2023).¹⁹

The independent evaluation report's key purpose is to assess program performance to date and capture key lessons learnt. It provides an evidence-based assessment of the PBPP and SIBDP Phase 3's performance to date, to inform future programming by DFAT and DAFF:

- Accountability – to provide stakeholders (including DFAT Post and Office of the Pacific development program managers) with an independent assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and relevance
- Lessons learnt – to identify key insights and lessons learnt, if appropriate, to inform future agricultural program investment, management and design.

Evaluation questions

Key evaluation questions (KEQs) consistent with this intent are described in the table below and Appendix C. These are as per the final Evaluation Plan dated 18 September 2025. Underpinning all these questions is an intent to identify key insights and lessons learned. Matters of Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability were given principal focus, with Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) and Climate Change more minor topics.

The questions also overlap with OECD Development Assistance Committee criteria, which are internationally recognised standards for evaluating development programs and projects. They provide a framework to assess the quality and effectiveness of aid interventions, looking at Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability.

Users of this evaluation

The intended primary users of the evaluation are the DAFF staff managing the Programs and DFAT Office of the Pacific. Secondary users may include other DAFF areas that implement programs in the Pacific, PPPO and its members, biosecurity-related agencies in Samoa, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Fiji, and the SPC Land and Resources Division. Tertiary users include wider DFAT Posts and other DFAT staff, New Zealand MFAT, and staff implementing PACER Plus and PHAMA Plus.

¹⁹ Available at: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/dfat-design-monitoring-evaluation-learning-standards>. Current version dated September 2023.

Table 4: Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) summary

Domain	Key Evaluation Question (KEQs) and sub-questions
Effectiveness	Were programs funded under the PBPP agreement (PBPP and SIBDP) effective in achieving overarching EOPOs? - What has the program delivered to date, and is expected to be delivered by its end? Consider program activities/streams and progress towards: (a) intermediate outcomes and (b) EOPOs - Were there any parts of the program where effectiveness was limited in relation to the outcomes? Or which hindered the outcomes? - To what extent did the Programs support regional collaboration, coordination and information sharing between regional programs and organisations in regard to biosecurity, trade and market access?
Efficiency	Did the investments make appropriate and efficient use of Australia's and our partners' time and resources to achieve intended outcomes? - What did the programs cost during the period under review? - To what extent and in what ways was the program delivered efficiently? Any Value for Money insights? Opportunities for efficiency?
Sustainability	To what extent have the PBPP and SIBDP contributed to the development of sustainable improvements in the biosecurity system, market access and trade capability in the Pacific region? - To what extent are the outcomes of program activities likely to be sustained by stakeholders in the Pacific or benefits continued? - Were appropriate mechanisms and partnerships established to support the long-term sustainability of outcomes? - To what extent have factors like local ownership, policy environment and resource availability influenced the sustainability of program outcomes?
Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)	How has PBPP and SIBDP advanced inclusive development? - What allowances, if any, were made for socially disadvantaged groups in the delivery or design of the program? - How could the program allow for tailored interventions or special attention to socially disadvantaged groups in ways that allow them to enjoy program benefits equally with others in that community/population or organisation?
Climate Change	How has PBPP and SIBDP supported partners to address climate change? - To what extent has the program equipped participants with skills/ capabilities to anticipate and respond to biosecurity challenges exacerbated by climate change? - What allowances, if any, were made for the impacts of climate change in the delivery or design of the program?
Identifying Key Insights and Lessons Learned	- What are the key barriers and challenges to regional collaboration, coordination and information sharing in regard to biosecurity, trade and market access? - What opportunities exist to strengthen consistent and collaborative biosecurity, trade and market access opportunities in the Pacific? What critical gaps remain to strengthening Pacific biosecurity, food security and support agricultural sector growth? - Were there any unintended positive or negative consequences of the program's initiatives that provide valuable insights?

2.2 Evaluation data sources and methods

Evaluation data collection includes a combination of primary and secondary sources, applied to mixed methods analysis:

- desktop data review – including of financial reporting, formal agreements and MoUs, unpublished internal activity reports and activity plans, annual reports, training review reports and other material published online. A summary of key internal materials is found in Appendix A.
- interviews with key internal and external stakeholders – interviews conducted between August and November 2025 with 35 stakeholders in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Participants included current and former DAFF program managers and technical advisors, PIC biosecurity agency and partner organisation personnel, and DFAT representatives both in-country and in Australia. Interviews were variously conducted in-person and remotely via Microsoft Teams video-meetings (see Appendix D Stakeholder interviews for detail).
- qualitative observation through visiting people (as noted above), facilities and equipment (e.g. offices, border inspection facilities, laboratories) – through short visits (approx. three days) to each of Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, and in Samoa²⁰, in late October to mid-November 2025.

The evaluation team consisted of an Evaluation Team Leader and a further Principal contributor who collaborated on evaluation design and delivery, with specialist input from a Pacific cultural and institutional expert. Two additional analysts supported on aspects of desktop review.

The lens through which we have developed evaluation findings and, particularly, reflections on lessons learned and recommendations, is a principally a rationalist evaluation approach, accompanied by an understanding of Pacific cultural systems (see 'Practice note: Understanding Pacific cultural systems').

2.3 Key limitations

While evaluation design (such as use of both primary and secondary data, and breadth of stakeholder engagement) sought to reduce their impacts, key residual limitations to this evaluation include:

- The evaluation was limited through the time (three months) and budget available. This necessitated a wide-ranging while strategically-focused evaluation that is not an extensive deep dive into each individual activity supported by program funds or in-kind resources.
- Experimental evaluation design approaches could not be applied given the lack of a suitable control. We therefore assess attribution (strength of causality) through qualitative perspectives drawing on expected causal drivers and confounding factors assuming a business-as-usual counterfactual where program-related efforts and influence does not occur.

²⁰ Samoa is the place of residence of one of the evaluation team (i.e. Pacific expert), so not an additional visit.

- As discussed in section 3.1, program funds were sometimes allocated to broaden business-as-usual activities or to facilitate their greater or more diverse uptake, or to fill a co-funding gap to provide certainty for an activity to go ahead. The distinctions between business-as-usual and 'program-enhanced', and so attributable to the programs, is not always clear in available activity and performance information, requiring judgement and some subjectivity.
- Stakeholder-sourced evidence was further limited by stakeholder availability and interest, and the data able to be gathered through direct consultation in English by independent evaluators with short visits in-country. Information limits included challenges to stakeholders reflecting on program activities over the previous up-to-five years when some had only had more recent involvement, and challenges in Pacific-based stakeholders in particular isolating PBPP/SIBDP activities to reflect on with specificity (given some program activities were co-funded, and the Australian Government also provided other non-PBPP/SIBDP support for PICs).
- The evaluation does not include a quantitative analysis of the Program's influence on market access and consequent trade activity. Existing data is unlikely to provide meaningful insights, for example as stakeholders consistently reported that Pacific horticultural exports to Australia remain very low, influenced by factors beyond biosecurity—especially post-pandemic.²¹

The program seeks, in part, to influence long-term matters including better market access and biosecurity outcomes beyond the program-funded period; with expected outcomes/benefits perhaps continuing 5-10 years into the future. While those future impacts are inherently uncertain, we draw conclusions about what we reasonably expect having regard to the evidence available.

2.4 Evaluation governance

An ERG, including officials from DAFF and DFAT²², has provided contextual and strategic input to the evaluation process to assist Sapere to deliver high quality, timely outputs. The ERG follows a Terms of Reference agreed in September 2025.

Its role includes, in summary, (1) feedback on evaluation methodology, scope and structure, including alignment with the Design and MEL Standards; (2) providing contacts for in-country interviews, and helping to coordinate the participation of Post, DAFF and partners in country (if required); (3) providing written materials and data to inform the evaluation.

Sapere developed an Evaluation Plan which the ERG approved out-of-session on 19 September 2025.

²¹ For example, program influence on Pacific agricultural exports is not directly observable through available trade volume and biosecurity certificate data, largely due to the program being focused on only some aspects of market access and biosecurity alongside various other programs and external confounding factors. Moreover, SPC's published horticultural export data only goes back to 2022 only and some crops (like Taro) cannot be disaggregated from the HS Code Classification levels. Future evaluations, once the Program is more established, could potentially draw on longer historical trends, Pacific Trade Invest export volume data, or surveys of Australian biosecurity and border personnel regarding Pacific goods.

²² Bonnie Learmonth, Assistant Director, International Capacity Development, DAFF; Adam Herden, International Capacity Development, DAFF; Latitia Chow, Office of the Pacific, DFAT; Semy Siakimotu, SIBDP Manager, DAFF.

Practice note: Understanding Pacific cultural systems

Understanding cultural systems is critical to analysing how biosecurity systems function in practice across PICs. Beyond formal institutional arrangements, island-specific socio-cultural and political practices shape how biosecurity 'best practices' are interpreted, negotiated, and implemented. Because of this, regional harmonisation is a goal that has natural limits: biosecurity systems will look different in each place.

Pacific shared values and Pacific worldviews underpin how institutions collaborate and respond to external support.

Concepts often referred to collectively as the "Pacific Way" shape approaches to leadership, consensus-building, and partnership. These can enable trust and cooperation – but may also slow decision-making where external program timelines do not align with local processes. The "Pacific Way" can also be described as Pacific resilience, reflecting prolonged adaptation in geographically dispersed island contexts. Pacific resilience is a concept that challenges deficit-based narratives that frame PICs as inherently limited.

The Samoan proverb "*E fofo e le alamea le alamea*"—meaning **communities are both the source of their challenges and their solutions**—captures this dynamic.

(As articulated by the late Epeli Hau'ofa, the Pacific can be more usefully understood as a region of "Large Ocean States", with shared oceanic space, knowledge systems, and relational strength.)

Each PIC functions within its own culturally informed system of governance and decision-making. Regional geopolitics and groupings—namely Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia—continue to exert a strong influence on patterns of collaboration, trust, and information exchange. For example the Melanesian countries Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu have many shared norms, institutional familiarity, and long-standing relationships. These informal cultural dynamics, including unspoken rules and relational practices, materially affect cooperation.

It would be short-sighted to limit the assessment of the enabling environment to visible, formal elements such as legislation, regulatory frameworks, strategies, and planning instruments designed to align with international standards. While these are necessary components, experience shows that their existence alone does not ensure effective implementation. For example, market access frameworks or compliance frameworks may be present, yet in practice they work differently.

Development assistance often delivers greater value when positioned as enabling locally driven solutions, reinforcing existing strengths, and supporting long term institutional relationships rather than acting as the primary driver of reform.

Recognising these dynamics can frame – or reframe – how one might assess progress for the Programs. While regulatory performance in PICs are often portrayed as lagging behind international norms, this perspective can overlook locally significant achievements and achievements in building relationships.

3. Effectiveness

Were programs funded under the PBPP agreement (PBPP and SIBDP) effective in achieving overarching EOPOs?

3.1 Program activities and key outputs

The program outputs have included a wide mix of focused and ongoing discussions, training and capacity-building development and delivery, workshops on strategic matters, equipment provision, and other bespoke activities over time driven by country requests and priorities as well as DAFF-determined priorities.

We arrange these by the four key streams of activities outlined in section 1.2.1 and the program logic, to provide an overview:

- Regional Biosecurity Development Support
- Regional Trade and Market Access Support
- Regional Stakeholder Engagement and Communications
- SIBDP Phase 3.

While not a material issue, some allocations by Sapere are subjective, for example we have included country pest surveys in Regional Biosecurity Development Support when it could also be considered a Regional Trade and Market Access Support activity. Content in this section is largely drawn from departmental annual progress reports.

While not necessarily comprehensive, this outline aims to highlight activities that program resources have been principally applied to over time, including levels of uptake and use. Further activity information is available in Appendix E, including a summary of examples of program activities across individual PICs.

Further, as noted in Section 1.2.1, many program activities have involved co-funding with other agencies, or PBPP/SIBDP Phase 3 program funding has enhanced business-as-usual activities (e.g. prioritising assistance to Pacific countries), and so aggregate activity is not always solely attributable to the programs.

Regional Biosecurity Development Support

Table 5: Key outputs – Regional Biosecurity Development Support

Activity	Key outputs
AFAS training participation expansion	• AFAS [Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme] training in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in February-March 2023, with 24 participants (20 from PNG National Agriculture & Quarantine Inspection Authority (NAQIA) and industry, 4 from BSI and industry) and 23 assessed as competent. • AFAS training in PNG in May 2025, including support for Biosecurity Vanuatu participation, all assessed as competent.

Activity	Key outputs
Plant health surveillance	- Plant Health surveys in Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga, plus technical advisory support for surveillance work in Solomon Islands (delivered with PACER Plus and New Zealand MPI). - Included in-country or virtual workshops with PIC staff covering: International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) surveillance requirements, surveillance planning, coordination & delivery, information systems, pest reporting and pest free area establishment. - Purchase of specialised consumables for ongoing PIC surveillance work. - Provided relevant factsheets and resources.
Animal health surveillance	Animal Health surveys and disease investigations supported in Solomon Islands for poultry.
Border training resources	- Four draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Biosecurity Border Operations for International passengers, aircraft, vessels, cargo etc presented at the recent PPPO meeting and which are currently out for comment with members. - Continuing to draft the full suite of SOPs with SPC expected by December 2025.
Vanuatu bilateral support	- Coordination and delivery of Vanuatu border biosecurity operational training (2025). - Coordination and delivery of Vanuatu animal health and livestock technical training (2025 and 2026).

Regional Trade and Market Access Support

Key elements include market access support (including for chillies, breadfruit and taro) and export pathway training, promoting clean sea container practices, and support for regional electronic systems.

In addition to activities directly impacting Pacific stakeholders, PBPP has also indirectly supported Pacific trade to Australia by resourcing DAFF technical and scientific areas to give greater priority to Pacific matters (e.g. market access requests, assessments, audits). This has significantly brought forward or expanded trade foundations. An example is funding to DAFF's Plant Sciences & Risk Assessment (PSARA) bringing forward import risk analysis (see below) arguably by many years.

Market access and export pathway training

Table 6: Key outputs- market access and export pathway training

Activity	Key outputs
Plant Trade and Market Access Support	- DAFF import risk analysis for fresh capsicums from Fiji, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu completed in December 2021, with a view to a subsequent workplan on pest risk management. - July 2023 technical visit from DAFF to Fiji to support Fiji progress market access workplan for export of fresh chillies and fresh breadfruit to Australia.

Activity	Key outputs
	November 2023 technical visit from DAFF to Samoa to support Samoa progress market access workshop to re-enter the Australian market for fresh taro following detection of a trade-sensitive pest.
Pacific Export Pathways (PEP) training	- Piloted and delivered full PEP training in Fiji in 2022. Eight PEP training modules developed. - Full PEP program in Apia (Samoa) over 13-17 November 2023, with over 40 participants from Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau and Tonga, with PACER Plus also supporting. - PEP operational training workshop in Vanuatu in April 2024. - October 2024 PEP operational training in the Solomon Islands.
Responding to queries	DAFF's International Capacity Development Section and other relevant DAFF areas responding to queries and requests from exporters, importers, and Pacific governments (e.g. technical support, market access issues, addressing regulatory impediments, reviewing import conditions for key commodities).

Updating Regional Plant List Database and advancing implementation of ePhyto and Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS)

Table 7: Key outputs – Updating Regional Plant List Database and advancing implementation of ePhyto and GeNS

Activity	Key outputs
Pacific Plant List Database (PLD) upgrade	- Conducted webinars and completed preparatory work, then initiated the upgrade to functionality in 2022. The upgrades include transition of the database to a cloud-ready architecture allowing better scalability, security, and future development. The upgraded system is designed to support IPPC International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs 6, 8, 17, 19) and WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) obligations in day-to-day operations. - The upgraded database was introduced during a training workshop in Nadi, Fiji in June 2023, attended by 19 biosecurity representatives from eight Pacific countries (co-funded with SAFE and New Zealand MPI). - Additional updates planned in the 2025 workplan.
GeNS	- ePhyto coordinator appointed, aligned with regional aims to introduce ePhyto systems (2020-21). - Readiness assessment for ePhyto expanded to Tranche 1 countries (not all named beyond Samoa and Fiji) (2020-21). - Computers procured for Samoa implementation of GeNS. - Pacific country GeNS leads confirmed in June 2023, and subsequent regional workshops including Nov 2023 in Fiji (23 personnel attended) to plan ePhyto implementation and GeNS training. - Fiji, Samoa, Cook Islands started to send and receive ePhyto certificates (2023-24). - Australia exchanged ePhyto certificates with Biosecurity Authority of Fiji for horticulture and grain exports to Fiji in November 2023.

Promoting clean sea container practices

Table 8: Key outputs – promoting clean sea container practices

Activity	Key outputs
Sea container operational support	- Support for six PIC NPPOs (Fiji, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands) to participate in July 2023 International Sea Container workshop in Brisbane organised by the Sea Container Focus Group of the Commission of Phytosanitary Measures. - Developing and promoting Offshore sea container Quality Systems (OQS), including the Sea Container Hygiene System.²³ in PNG. DAFF's contribution to establishing OQS in new ports is through facilitation of stakeholder discussions, auditing activities, capacity building through provision of expertise, and supporting international and regional discussions on strategies for sea container risk management. - Progressing OQS concept in PNG over Oct-Dec 2023 including discussions with The PNG Biosecurity Authority, PNG Ports Corporation, PACER Plus and others. - Developing four sea container pathway cleanliness guidance and awareness raising videos (expected to be complete in 2025-26)
Sea container regional strategic work	- Established a working group of PPPO members (Pacific Sea Container Working Group) to consider regulatory and non-regulatory options for informing a Pacific strategy. Regional Workshop in Fiji in November 2024.²⁴ of Pacific government representatives and industry partners to discuss Pacific Strategy for the Sea Container Pathway.²⁵ The Program funded 15 PPPO members to attend.²⁶ - Pacific Strategy for the Sea Container Pathway developed, with draft released in June 2025 and PPPO member agreement and finalisation expected by October 2026. - Collaboration across this process included NPPOs, Customs and Trade officials, international development organisations, research organisations, and industry stakeholders such as shipping lines, port authorities, and container depot operators.

Regional Stakeholder Engagement and Communications

PBPP program communication and governance channels since its inception (see summary in Appendix E) have included:

- mechanisms for coordination within DAFF or between DAFF and DFAT, which have evolved to regular DAFF-DFAT manager (EL2 and EL1) meetings, and activity-level meetings (e.g. regarding Pacific sea container work)
- mechanisms for coordination between Australian and other Pacific stakeholders:

²³ The Sea Container Hygiene System is a voluntary biosecurity agreement mechanism, with either private entities or overseas governments, which seeks to manage biosecurity risk associated with sea containers imported from high-risk countries at the port of loading.

²⁴ Pacific Strategy for the Sea Container Pathway Workshop: Strengthening Biosecurity & Digitalizing Sea Container Trade, Nadi, Fiji, 25 – 29 Nov 2024

²⁵ DAFF 2024-25 Sea Container Activity Report.

²⁶ The World Bank Group and PACER Plus Implementation Unit also contributed to the Workshop expenses.

- which included initially (until late September 2022²⁷) a multi-party Pacific Engagement and Communication Network between DAFF, PHAMA Plus, PACER Plus, New Zealand MFAT and New Zealand MPI
- now includes DAFF and New Zealand MPI meeting regularly and regular country activity meetings.

Communication activities have included:

- developing and implementing a regional trade and market access communication strategy (early in the program)
- re-brand, launch and ongoing use of a dedicated DAFF Pacific engagement webpage²⁸
- multi-lateral communication through the channels described above, including the Pacific Engagement and Communication Network
- ongoing bilateral communications with individual PICs about activities, needs and preferences
- formalised collaborations with SPC, PHAMA Plus, PACER Plus and others on specific projects.

Continued collaboration with New Zealand and regional bodies is evident, at activity-level. For instance, offshore sea container quality systems (OQS) in the Pacific are currently focused on PICs providing clean containers to Australia and New Zealand, with mutual recognition arrangements and shared responsibilities negotiated between DAFF and New Zealand MPI. The Program appears to be managing this relationship well, evident in activities like DAFF and New Zealand MPI jointly reviewing considerations for a Pacific strategy for managing risks associated with sea container movements more broadly within the Pacific, prior to convening a regional workshop to discuss this.

SIBDP Phase 3

SIBDP – a more flexible program than the formal ‘projects’ of PBPP – has principally involved resourcing DAFF personnel to work with Solomon Islands agencies.

The range of activities undertaken has been extremely wide-ranging and responsive to needs and agency requests, from various training (discussed below), to planning support, to new BSI uniforms and operational materials, to diagnostic testing for cattle, goats and wild birds, to less formal strategy guidance for senior Solomon Islands agency personnel. See Appendix E for further detail.

Approach to DAFF personnel delivery

SIBDP Phase 3 has introduced an In-Country Coordinator (ICC), a role not present in earlier phases. The ICC is tasked with mentoring BSI leadership, facilitating stakeholder engagement, and overseeing the implementation of technical and operational improvements. The role was designed to address the leadership and governance gaps identified in previous reviews, through supporting institutional leadership and governance within BSI and MAL.

²⁷ DAFF indicated that members agreed that the group had met its purpose and was no longer needed.

²⁸ See: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/policy/australia/public-awareness/pacific-engagement>

DAFF arrangements for SIBDP have evolved over the last few years, with different combinations of roles and ongoing presence in-country. Since mid-2024, a single DAFF officer in-country has been undertaking a combined ICC/Manager and Biosecurity Advisor role. A similar single Biosecurity Technical Advisor/Country Coordinator role was also in place from mid-2023 (including for preparation for the November-December 2023 Pacific Games). Earlier Phase 3 personnel structure comprised an ICC, National Facilitator and Project Officer. Most recently, the DAFF ICC role has been co-located within BSI's head office supporting ongoing informal as well as formal engagement, essentially as a 'strategic advisor' function to the executive of Solomon Islands biosecurity agencies.

Training and capacity building

Noting likely less than 150 employees in BSI and Solomon Islands Customs combined, SIBDP-associated training has achieved significant penetration in diverse matters such as biosecurity awareness, vessel clearance, X-ray detection, legislation, prosecution and fumigation (Table 9)

Table 9: Key outputs – training under SIBDP Phase 3

Training type	Key outputs
Biosecurity awareness	- Trained 15 newly recruited officers in 2024, and 78 experienced and new Customs officers in 2023, in biosecurity awareness..²⁹ - Induction training to 19 participants, including MAL Extension and Livestock Officers..³⁰ - Performance Management Process training delivered to all Honiara-based and provincial BSI staff..³¹
Compliance and enforcement	- Facilitated participation of AFAS fumigation training in PNG to two BSI officers, two Ports Authority officers, and two industry representatives in the AFAS. The BSI Officers were also trained to audit fumigation procedures..³² - Two compliance and audit officers travelled to PNG to attend the Methyl Bromide Fumigation and Audit Training to support Solomon Islands' alignment with the AFAS..³³ (see section 3.1.1).
Surveillance & diagnostics	Two surveillance officers participated in the 2024 Australia Annual Surveillance Workshop in Brisbane, alongside PNG and Timor-Leste counterparts..³⁴
Legislation and prosecution	Legislation training delivered to 26 BSI officers in Honiara and Western Province in June 2023..³⁵

²⁹ SIBDP Annual Report 2024, p. 2

³⁰ SIBDP Annual Report 2022-23, p.2

³¹ SIBDP Annual Report 2021-22, p.6

³² SIBDP Annual Report 2022-23, p.3

³³ SIBDP Annual Report 2024, p.5

³⁴ SIBDP Annual Report 2024, p.5

³⁵ SIBDP Annual Report 2022-23, p.2

Training type	Key outputs
Specialised technical	18 BSI operations officers trained in X-ray detection in March 2023 by DAFF.³⁶ BSI also negotiated for five BSI officers to attend Australian Border Force X-ray training with Customs officers in March 2023. - Training by technical consultant on Asian Subterranean Termite for BSI and Research staff in 2024. - Animal health survey conducted with DAFF and SPC vets; training delivered to MAL livestock officers (2023-25).
Pacific Games	Various trainings for Pacific Games preparation.

Pacific Games preparation

Examples of SIBDP work with respect to the November-December 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara included:³⁷

- a strategic assessment and operational plan for airport operations, and wider training and mentoring for BSI's airport and seaport team to improve operations ready for the influx of visitors to Honiara
- other 'influencing' work included recommending priority renovations for the International Arrival Terminal Building (including inspection benches, wash bay room, counter windows, doors and glass works), funded by other mechanisms
- revising and updating the BSI communications strategy to prioritise the Pacific Games campaign, and coordinating with Solomon Airlines and Tourism Solomons to facilitate information dissemination
- developing a surveillance and trapping plan including increased surveillance for Honiara and surrounding area prior to (and after) the Pacific Games.

3.2 Achieving intended program outcomes

Assessment by intermediate outcomes

These stream-based activities directly align to the intended intermediate outcomes, as shown in the table below. Successful activities contribute to the achievement of those intermediate outcomes.

³⁶ SIBDP Annual Report 2022-23, p.2

³⁷ Based on SIBDP Annual Report 2023, various pages

Table 10: Alignment between activities and intermediate outcomes

Activities (as above)	Intermediate outcomes associated with Activities
Regional Biosecurity Development Support	Gaps identified and addressed to foster Pacific NPPO's consistent and harmonised biosecurity measures across the region
Regional Trade and Market Access Support	Pacific regional trade and market access opportunities promoted, and clean & compliant plant product trade facilitated
Regional Stakeholder Engagement and Communications and program coordination	Effective communication, engagement, collaboration & coordination with regional programs and partners
SIBDP Phase 3	- Stronger BSI and MAL capacity to deliver core biosecurity functions effectively - Assisted management of biosecurity risks associated with anticipated infrastructure development & 2023 Pacific Games preparations

Table 11 explores the extent to which the outputs described have or are achieving each intermediate outcome (the first three principally aligned with PBPP, and the remainder with SIBDP Phase 3). We use a 'plant life-cycle' metaphor to explore progress towards effectiveness, noting progress can also stall at each stage of the life-cycle. Our assessment has also had regard to Pacific systems of culture and trusted relationships (discussed in section 2).

Figure 2: Plant life-cycle as metaphor for progress towards effectiveness

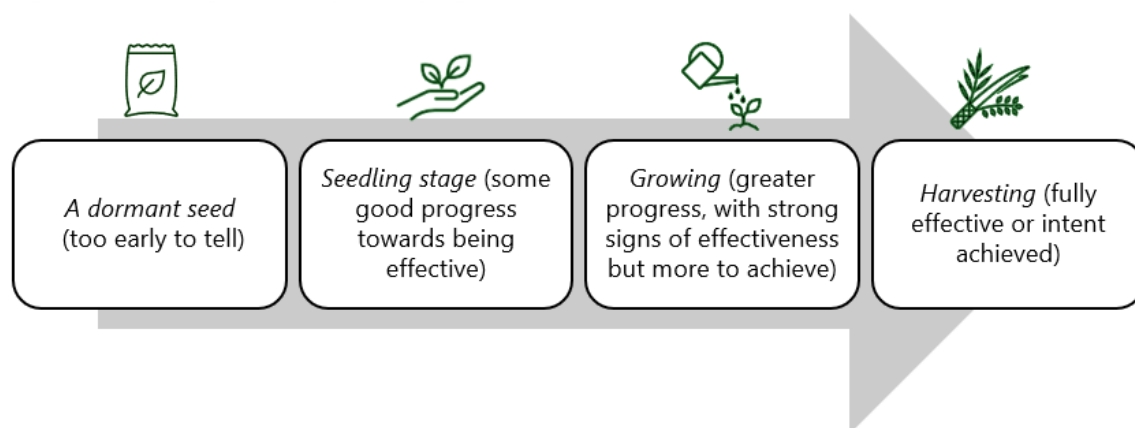


Table 11: Effectiveness assessment with respect to intermediate outcomes

Intermediate outcomes	Aligned to
1. Gaps identified and addressed to foster Pacific NPPOs' consistent and harmonised biosecurity measures across the region 	PBPP

Intermediate outcomes	Aligned to
<i>Seedling. Some progress towards being effective.</i> With biosecurity measures broadly defined, there is groundwork laid for Pacific NPPOs (or PIC biosecurity agencies in general) to have harmonised biosecurity measures across the region. While gaps in the harmonised system have been identified, the Program's identification of gaps has not been uniform or structured. This is a weakness that needs addressing before the Program can be effective, efficient and sustainable. Without a guiding structure for assessing where gaps lie, the Program's attempts to address observed gaps have been somewhat ad-hoc, reflecting the complexity of working with other donors, other programs and within DAFF's own systems. Key progress towards consistent and harmonised biosecurity measures in the region includes: • Progress on SOPs intended to improve regional efficacy and consistency (e.g. for inspections) • Solomon Islands and Vanuatu officials as well as PNG experiencing AFAS training • Other relevant training in areas of better practice, appropriate to Pacific context – including some focus on systemic capacity building (e.g. train the trainer model; regional trainers). • Pest surveys implemented in several Pacific countries, improving surveillance • Furthered regional standards and systems (e.g. container hygiene, ePhyto, PLD).	
2. Pacific regional trade and market access opportunities promoted, and clean & compliant plant product trade facilitated  <i>Growing. Greater progress, with strong signs of effectiveness but more to achieve</i> Market access is affected by a wide range of influences and is supported by several donor and government stakeholders; this makes delivery complex. More work is needed to ensure that the Program is clear with itself and others about where it 'fits' in the trade and market access delivery landscape. More focus will need to be put on aligning and connecting with other programs that are designed to support genuine export opportunities for Pacific nations. The Program supported many aspects of trade and market access including sea containers Offshore Quality Systems, training on keeping sea containers clean, operational pathway development and training, fumigation accreditation training,	PBPP

Intermediate outcomes	Aligned to
regional plant health surveillance, plant pest and disease surveys and fumigation dialogues. Key progress includes: • Good uptake of Pacific Export Pathways training with Pacific biosecurity agencies, with consistently favourable participant reviews • Market access risk mitigation discussions with some countries continuing • GeNS / ePhyto not yet delivering on potential with low readiness in most PICs • PLD investment worthwhile but not yet impactful • Clear directions arising from sea container strategy, now needing implementation focus. The Program has supported enhanced trade pathways (e.g. taro from Samoa and Cook Islands, Tahitian lime from Vanuatu, containerised goods).	
3. Effective communication, engagement, collaboration & coordination with regional programs and partners  <i>Growing. Greater progress, with strong signs of effectiveness but more to achieve</i> There is consistent and strong evidence that the Program has good foundations for collaboration. It was designed to be – and continues to be - aligned to the programs of relevant multilateral stakeholders, both regional and international. Evidence supports that the Program strengthened relationships between Pacific NPPOs/biosecurity agencies and Australia and the conditions have been laid for these relationships to continue to improve. Further, there is consistent and strong evidence of strengthened relationships between Pacific NPPOs and the IPPC (facilitated by Australia), and between DAFF and the PHAMA Plus and PACER Plus programs, and ongoing relationships between Australian/New Zealand agencies. More is needed to ensure sustainability because the priorities of the parties continue to be shaped by changing pressures on budgets and priorities. Relationships have been supportive of SPC but this relationship is complex and the partnership continues to evolve.	PBPP
4. Stronger BSI and MAL capacity to deliver core biosecurity functions effectively	SIBDP Phase 3

Intermediate outcomes	Aligned to
 Seedling. Some progress toward being effective Biosecurity in Solomon Islands, including agency capacity, is likely stronger due to SIBDP Phase 3. Key progress includes: • Wide range of appropriate training with good participation, although it is not clear that “a shift from one-off training events to a continuous learning model, aligned with operational needs and strategic goals” (as envisaged in planning documents) has been fully achieved • Substantial informal support highly valued by evolving BSI and MAL • No material issues arising from Pacific Games or concurrent development. SIBDP while modest is highly regarded and highly valued by local stakeholders. We heard a view that, despite useful steps, individual successes and positive momentum, not enough overall impact has been observed on biosecurity system improvements (including those that also help drive local agricultural development), and after three phases it now may be reasonable to expect more ambitious results. However, Solomon Islands biosecurity functions remain relatively fragile, with reasonable technical competence but many strategic and day-to-day challenges including infrastructure constraints, limited scale and geographic coverage of staff, and under-developed management systems.	
5. Assisted management of biosecurity risks associated with anticipated infrastructure development & 2023 Pacific Games preparations  Harvesting. This outcome has been achieved and the benefits are being realised. Yes, the SIBDP Program supported the Pacific Games preparations effectively. This workstream is complete. The lessons and skills from this process are available to be applied to future Pacific Games like Tahiti, 2027.	SIBDP Phase 3

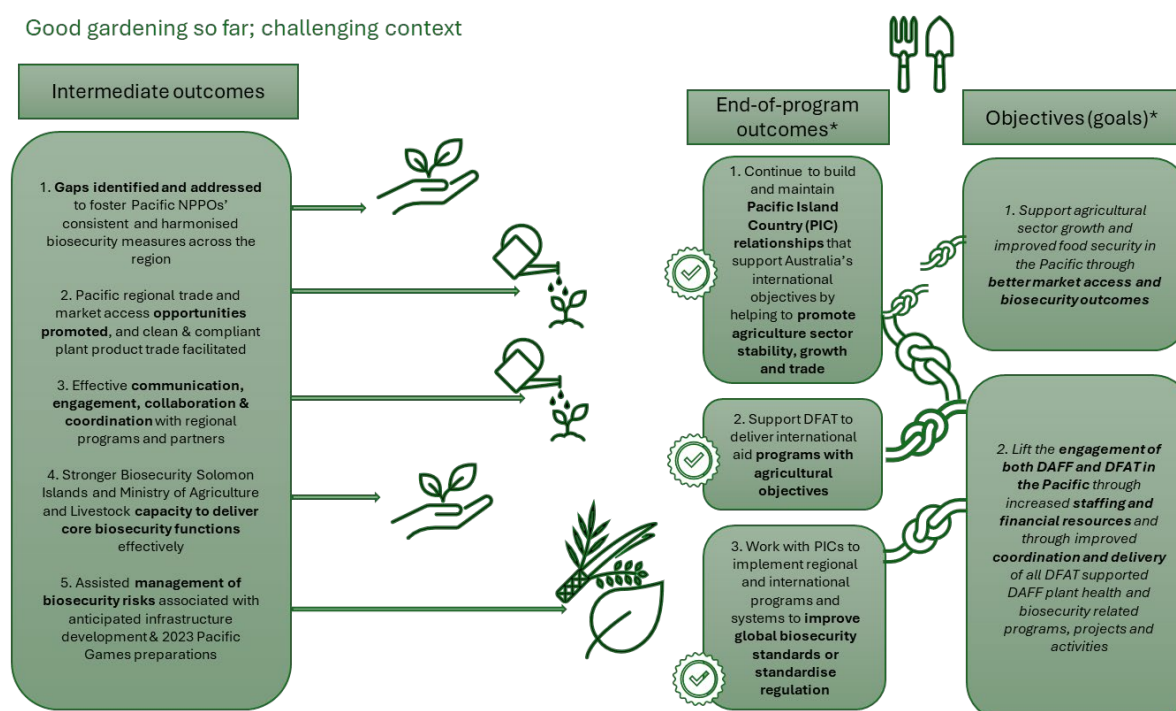
Summary

Our overall assessment is that PBPP and SIBDP (together, the Programs) have, on the whole, made meaningful progress toward their intended intermediate outcomes. As with any process of continuous improvement, challenges remain.

Each biosecurity official consulted (from Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Samoa, Fiji), strongly endorsed the Programs, and so did officials from New Zealand MPI. Strong support was expressed, variously, for operational and technical training provided, the sea container program, the support for pest and disease identification for plants and animals, and the development of SOPs.

While some aspects experienced delays (including due to the disruptions created by the COVID pandemic), and results varied across elements of the Program, overall the Programs have demonstrated tangible results in strengthening biosecurity systems and improving technical capacity across participating countries, while responsive to evolving regional needs. This is a worthwhile achievement.

Figure 3: Pictorial summary of achievement of outcomes



Based on the findings above, we further consider the Programs are making steady and reasonable progress towards each of three EOPOs, as defined by program design documentation.³⁸

- The Programs are clearly supporting DFAT to deliver international aid programs with agricultural objectives, being the implementation mechanism.
- The Programs – amongst others – are continuing to maintain and build Australian-PIC relationships focused on biosecurity and agriculture trade potential, and so are helping to

³⁸ Noting achievement of EOPOs is challenging to confirm, as the EOPOs have been arguably framed more as outputs or associated processes ('continue to build and maintain...', 'support to deliver...', 'work with PICs to implement...') rather than clear and explicit 'end states' resulting from change.

promote agriculture sector stability, growth and trade consistent with Australia's international objectives..³⁹

- The Programs are working with PICs to implement regional and international programs and systems, albeit that progress is sometimes gradual – or faster in some places than others – as it requires PICs to have capability and capacity for effective and sustainable implementation (a theme further discussed in section 5).

There are weaker linkages between the Programs and market access and agricultural development objectives. If this is to be the primary goal or a co-primary goal of the Programs then more focus will need to be put on aligning and connecting with other programs that are designed to support genuine export opportunities for Pacific nations.

Challenges remain, discussed further in section 7. Strengthening biosecurity systems is best understood as a process of continuous improvement in a changing context. The conditions have been laid for this to continue.

³⁹ Food security and agricultural sector growth objectives extend well beyond the scope of this Program and beyond what DAFF can realistically influence. While biosecurity work makes an important contribution to these broader goals, progress in food security and agricultural development depends on a much wider set of economic, environmental and institutional factors and action across multiple agencies and partners.

4. Efficiency

Did the investments make appropriate and efficient use of Australia's and our partners' time and resources to achieve intended outcomes?

4.1 Program resourcing

DFAT resourced DAFF with \$5.754 million over six years 2019–20 to 2024–25 for the Programs, consisting PBPP \$2.81 million and SIBDP \$2.94 million. A further \$1.2 million per year has been budgeted for the Programs in FY2025–26 and 2026–27.

Cumulative expenditure on both was a little less than budgeted, with \$2.456 million spent on PBPP by the end of FY2024–25 (87% of available budget) and \$2.838 million spent by SIBDP (97% of budget). DAFF expects that expenditure will align with the budget by the end of the program in mid-2027 (after this evaluation).

In addition, DAFF in-kind contributions to the Programs, through estimates of time contribution from staff not funded through DFAT resources, are valued at an estimated \$1.245 million (2019–20 to 2024–25).⁴⁰ This included \$557,876 over six years (2019–20 to 2024–25) to PBPP and \$687,500 to SIBDP. In-kind valuations are based on salary actuals, estimates of FTE commitment (beyond day-to-day roles) and a 25% organisational overhead margin.

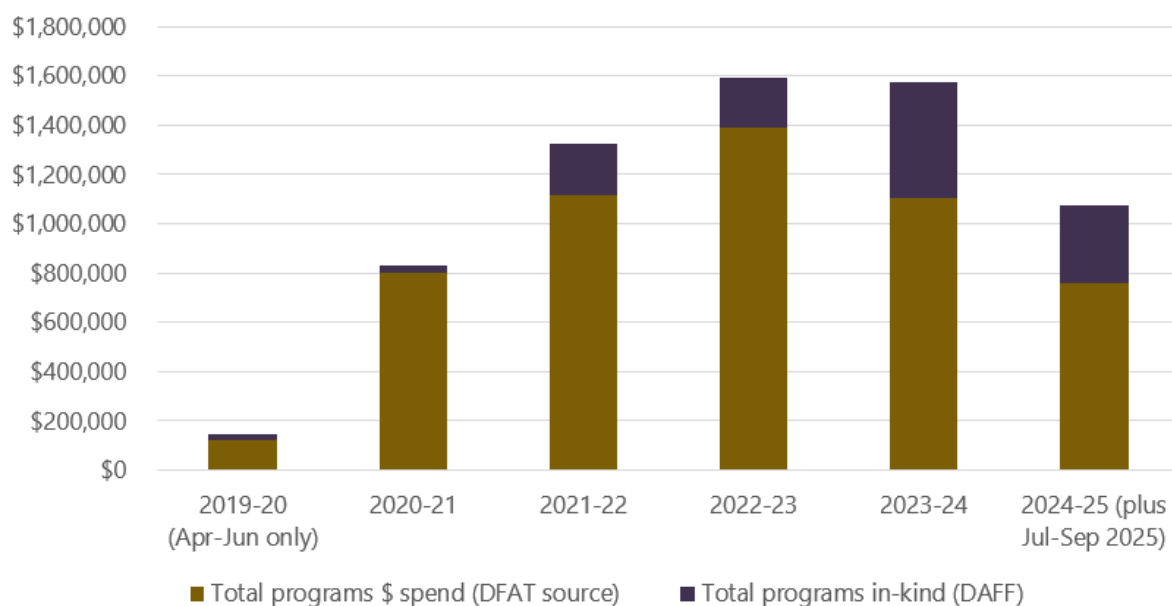
Table 12: Program costs

	2019-20 (Apr-Jun only)	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (plus Jul-Sep 2025)	SUM
PBPP \$ spend (DFAT source)	\$124,250	\$800,000	\$693,000	\$386,696	\$280,791	\$171,675	\$2,456,412
PBPP in-kind (DAFF source)	\$21,126	\$29,500	\$62,500	\$138,750	\$144,500	\$161,500	\$557,876
SIBDP Phase 3 \$ spend (DFAT)	N/A	N/A	\$421,000	\$1,002,000	\$825,000	\$590,000	\$2,838,000
SIBDP Phase 3 in-kind (DAFF)	N/A	N/A	\$150,000	\$62,500	\$325,000	\$150,000	\$687,500
Total spend	\$145,376	\$829,500	\$1,326,500	\$1,589,946	\$1,575,291	\$1,073,175	\$6,539,788
In-kind %	15%	4%	16%	13%	30%	29%	19%

Source: Sapere, with data provided by DAFF International Capacity Development Section and DFAT.

⁴⁰ In-kind contributions from Partner Governments and regional organisations are not included. These are difficult to separate from business as usual or were not directly attributable to the Programs. Further, no DFAT in-kind staffing is included as those staff resources are also likely not attributable to the program.

Figure 4: Program costs for PBPP and SIBDP Phase 3 combined



Within the PBPP program, the Pacific Export Pathway content and training, and GeNS Regional and PLD upgrade utilised the greatest share of DFAT/financial resources.¹ Sea container work and PPBP program management utilised the bulk of in-kind DAFF resources.

Activity-level reporting in this evaluation, however, is limited by sometimes incomplete information, especially with respect to in-kind estimates. The available information from internal materials is not sufficiently reliable across different activities to report and compare in this evaluation. Reporting for accountability and to inform decision-making would benefit from clear and consistent cost categorisation by activity or grouping of related activities, over time across both financial and in-kind.

4.2 Achieving efficiency and value for money

Navigating delays and underspends

DFAT funding was allocated in annual (financial year July to June) tranches, with a process for DAFF and DFAT to agree a costed program of work for the following year.

Fewer activities than planned in a given year, and therefore an under-spend relative to budget (see 'Difference' and 'Comments' rows in the table below relating to PBPP) has been a common experience, resulting from:

- formal DFAT-DAFF agreement of a costed annual program often not until several months into a new financial year, reducing the time available in the year for implementation
- delivery delays associated with implementing in-country activities such as training or surveillance with PICs (e.g. time to negotiate PIC processes and timeframes including feasible windows for implementation), noting the need to work around PIC realities

- some COVID-related delays early in the program (e.g. SPC ePhyto regional coordinator unable to travel to Pacific countries during 2021–22).

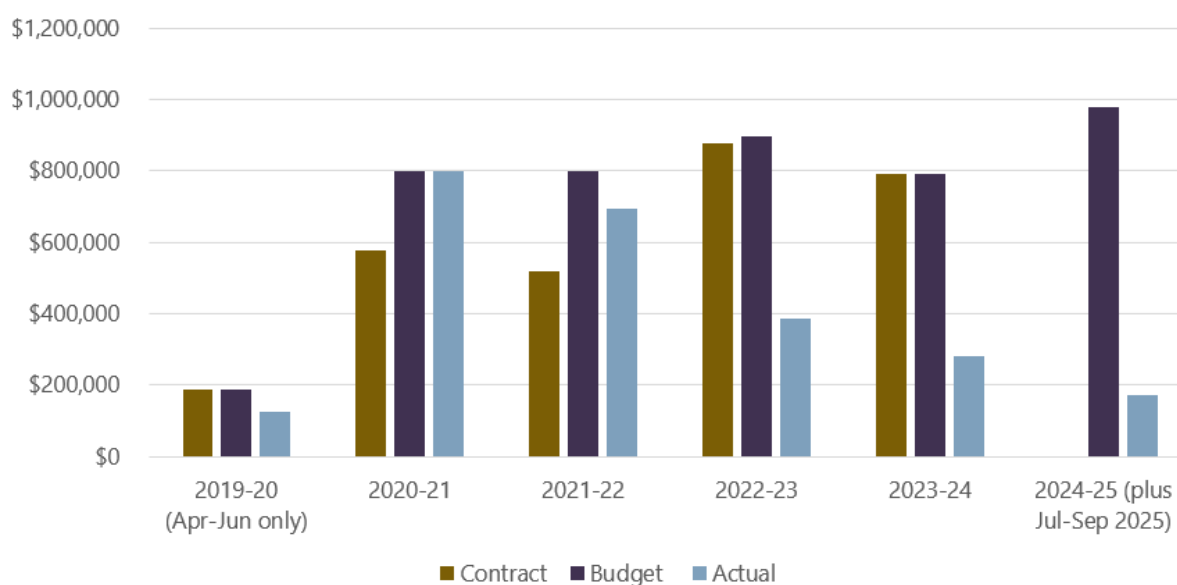
Delayed activities largely went ahead, just not always in the year they were initially planned. Under-spends were typically carried over to the following year when related activities mostly occurred.

Table 13: Actual versus budgeted costs for PBPP resources from DFAT (financial resources)

	2019-20 (last 3 months)	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (+ first 3 months of 2025-26)	TOTAL
Contract	\$187,250	\$579,257	\$520,000	\$878,000	\$789,874	N/A	\$2,954,381
Budget	\$187,250	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$895,550	\$789,874	\$980,000	-
Actual	\$124,250	\$800,000	\$693,000	\$386,696	\$280,791	\$171,675	\$2,456,412
Difference (between Budget and Actual)	\$63,000	\$0	\$107,000	\$508,854	\$509,083	\$808,325	-
Total spent (cumulative)	\$124,250	\$924,250	\$1,617,250	\$2,003,946	\$2,284,737	\$2,456,412	-
Comments	\$13k absorbed, \$50k carried over into next year	-	Under-spend carried over	Under-spend carried over	Under-spend carried over for no-cost extension	-	-

Source: Sapere analysis of DAFF documentation – ‘Summary report – PBPP finances (002), late 2025

Figure 5: Comparison between contract, annual budget and actual expenditure for PBPP resources from DFAT



Context for delivery and value for money

A considerable number of outputs have been delivered with, in effect, a rough average of \$1 million annual funding from DFAT.

This has resulted in very cost-effective delivery, particularly for the PBPP. The efficiency stems from the PBPP's design: it leverages in-kind contributions from DAFF (often accessing hard-to-obtain technical skills) and co-delivers some activities with Partners (PHAMA Plus, PACER Plus, SPC).

While some (not all) in-kind contributions in the form of DAFF staff time might have occurred under business-as-usual arrangements, the additional funding from DFAT considerably supported greater impact (especially when providing for travel, consumables and similar). For example, DAFF's business-as-usual efforts are able to be coordinated better under a program and the additional funding from DFAT has allowed DAFF to extend its bilateral and multilateral technical and operational support beyond its business-as-usual mandate (which has a near-neighbour focus). The funding has allowed for DAFF to support implementation of international and regional standards, which is also outside of core DAFF mandate and funding arrangements.

The PBPP did experience challenges. The program mostly navigated potential COVID-related disruption in 2020-21 and 2021-22. As described above, PBPP activities from 2022-23 tailed off with significant underspends resulting from delays or descoping. This period was influenced by DAFF PBPP and SIBDP management and leadership changes, and DFAT investment manager changes in its Office of the Pacific and Climate Resilient Agriculture and Food Security functions and at Post level. In 2022-23, 64% of the PBPP's Budget was unspent at the end of the period.

There has been some form of SIBDP for some time, since Phase 1, which commenced in April 2013. The SIBDP has now been delivered through three phases over a 13 year period. Delivery approaches and priorities have been based on the specific Phase outcomes, objectives and activities so each phase needs to be considered in that context. Phase 3 demonstrates an evolution of delivery approaches, with a commitment to having a funded expert working full-time within the agency on operational strengthening.

Increasing resources were applied to central DAFF coordination of the Programs. Some stakeholders perceived this responded to escalating internal governance and contracting expectations, increasingly cumbersome internal DAFF governance, procurement and approval processes, and a substantial administrative burden associated with sourcing external expertise.⁴¹

The burden of administration (as opposed to strategic guidance and coordination) should be monitored with a view to DAFF minimising unnecessary costs that limit the energy DAFF staff have available to support program outputs.

If DAFF was no longer able to continue in its implementation role, there are other organisations in Australia capable of implementing the PBPP program: universities, research institutes (like CSIRO) private veterinarians or/and laboratories could each potentially implement elements of the program,

⁴¹ One example of administrative complexity was DFAT needing to formally enter into an agreement with one non-Australian-based PBPP delivery provider as DAFF, at the time, did not have the authority to do so. DAFF administers the agreement on behalf of DFAT. This arrangement involved significant time and effort to resolve.

and some have expertise in managing international development projects. However, none would have all the technical staff required in one organisation, such that working through other organisations would probably add further cost and information flow complexity.

DAFF's difference is not just access to technical staff, but its role as regulator of Australia's biosecurity and its trusted counterpart relationships with Pacific biosecurity agencies and with institutions such as PPPO, PHOVAPS, IPPC and World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). These are unique characteristics that cannot be replicated.

If DAFF can no longer fully implement biosecurity-related Pacific programs beyond the next two years of the program, serious consideration could be given to bringing other organisations in who may, for selected elements, enable the Programs to continue as planned.

5. Sustainability

To what extent have the PBPP and SIBDP contributed to the development of sustainable improvements in the biosecurity system, market access and trade capability in the Pacific region?

A sustainable program is one where development gains are maintained beyond DFAT's involvement, and risks to continuity are identified and actively managed through design and implementation.⁴²

On this basis, the Programs have not yet achieved gains that are fully sustainable. However, significant steps toward sustainability have been made.

For example, all countries stressed the importance they give to the availability of pest and disease identification services, and to shared, peer-led training programs that help share good practices for surveillance for pests. As a result of the Programs, PIC officials are more confident to identify common endemic pests and diseases. Relationships have developed: several people mentioned that better pest identification processes have given local staff the ability to call up experts elsewhere to discuss and assist with the identification of difficult, unfamiliar, or recently arrived organisms.

The PBPP is still relatively new, having started early in 2020. PBPP program delivery has done well to navigate a rapidly-changing environment since its inception (COVID-19, then the reorganisation of New Zealand MPI, then staff turnover at DAFF and DFAT, alongside geopolitical changes in the region). The Program has been as flexible as is possible within the constraints of its arrangements with DFAT and DAFF.

SPC, PHOVAPS and the PPPO are the only Pacific agencies that are not time-bound⁴³ and serve the region for biosecurity, plant protection, and veterinary and animal health.⁴⁴ The Program has recognised the unique role of SPC and has not tried to work independently from it or independently from the PPPO. Instead, the SPC and PPPO have been actively engaged in activity delivery. Yet, SPC experiences ongoing challenges with securing the resourcing that would allow it to achieve technical depth across all of its functions. Indications are that reliance on Australia (DAFF) and New Zealand's (New Zealand MPI) technical support will continue.

Development gains remain vulnerable, however, as the PBPP continues beyond the immediate, it is at risk of losing direction. Observations from stakeholders included that the PBPP has appeared 'overly-reactive' and can be 'hard to interpret'. The main risks are overlapping and conflicting training/processes with other entities and trying to achieve too much across too many countries. These risks are known: the Program's design emphasised relationship building and alignment as core

⁴² This is Sapere's summarisation of DFAT's Design and MEL standards and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) criteria. Under the revised OECD DAC criteria (2019), sustainability is concerned with whether outcomes are maintained or adapted over time, even as contexts change. It asks evaluators to consider what happens after funding, technical assistance, or donor engagement ends.

⁴³ That is, not resulting from a specific, time-bound funding initiative.

⁴⁴ For animal disease diagnosis the WOA and PHOVAPS can provide similar services, although the former's remit is wider and the latter relies on SPC for organisational structures.

goals. These goals continue, even as the context for biosecurity and market access support provided by Australia in the Pacific continues to evolve.

SIBDP Phase 3 is somewhat designed with sustainability in mind. The ICC's role is explicitly framed as advisory and mentoring within implementation planning. The focus is building capability within BSI and MAL, rather than being dependent on external actors. The implementation plan included a withdrawal strategy for the ICC, including the readiness of BSI to operate independently, scheduled for late 2024. We are not aware this has been formally developed yet (noting the program was extended), and consider it should, including with a view to both 'soft' (people-social) and 'hard' (technical) factors.

6. Gender Equality, Disability & Social Inclusion and Climate Change

6.1 Gender Equality, Disability & Social Inclusion

How has PBPP and SIBDP advanced inclusive development?

The scope of this evaluation does not extend to the preparation of full GEDSI analysis. Instead, the evaluation asked what allowances, if any, were made for socially disadvantaged groups in the design or delivery of the program? And, in the future how could the program allow for tailored interventions or special attention to socially disadvantaged groups in ways that allow them to enjoy program benefits equally with others in that community/population or organisation?

The Programs have likely not materially advanced inclusive development yet, and there is no existing analytical framework for determining opportunities and entry points the programs could leverage to (1) ensure that the investment does no harm; and (2) identify priority areas of action in program design in relation to gender equality, and disability and social inclusion. If the future program investment is intended to be over \$3 million, then GEDSI analysis is required.⁴⁵

The evaluation did not uncover any apparent harms to inclusion nor did the research uncover any GEDSI-related issues that would impact the ability of the investment to achieve its EOPOs or intermediate outcomes.

GEDSI in program design

Both PBPP and SIBDP pre-date the Australian Government's current commitment to advancing gender equality, disability equity and social inclusion through its development programs.⁴⁶

Perhaps due to timing, GEDSI was not systematically embedded in the PBPP's program design. For example, there was no formal analysis of barriers for vulnerable groups conducted at the outset of the program. In later years there was some awareness and recognition of inclusion factors in the annual reports for PBPP of 2022-23 and 2023-24 and in activities planned in 2023-24 and 2024-25. The description of GEDSI factors in the later annual reports suggests that the analytical framework for GEDSI in the PBPP is weak. For example, the inclusion factors described in the reports are linked to women's overall participation in farming and agricultural production in the Pacific (factors that are external to the program). The annual reports for PBPP do not describe any factors that are internal to the program, such as how the program activities have minimised barriers for different social groups who had interacted with the program's activities in that period. Activity reports for workshops conducted under PBPP do include gender-disaggregated data and do describe the participation of

⁴⁵ DFAT (2023), Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion Analysis Good Practice Note, October 2023, <dfat.govt.au>

⁴⁶ The 2023 International Development Policy made Australia's commitment to systematic, mandatory integration of GEDSI factors across all development investments explicit.

women, but do not include disability-disaggregated data or data capturing people's experience based on their individual level of function.

SIBDP Phase 3's program proposal⁴⁷ acknowledged gender equality and inclusive participation, for example encouraging the participation of women involved in agricultural production and industries through stakeholder forums, workshops and extension activities. The program proposal stated DAFF would report against how the program has implemented and progressed in relation to gender equality, gender empowerment, disability and social inclusion. However, this did not include any specific, measurable actions or indicators or related targets, and subsequent progress reporting is reasonably superficial with respect to inclusive development. For example, the gender of biosecurity agency officials participating in training is not reported, nor is to extent to which gender of those participating in training in aggregate is representative of PIC biosecurity agencies.

GEDSI in program delivery

Interviewees generally felt that the Programs were inclusive of the right stakeholders and respectful of the cultures of the Pacific partner governments. However, stakeholders struggled to recall any specific program activities that was particularly inclusive by design and no interviewee was able to identify any specific allowances made in the activities for socially disadvantaged groups. Many of those interviewed were asked to comment about events that were held years prior and had varying knowledge of the breadth of the Programs, so this finding is not a strong indicator. At the same time, no stakeholder commented that the program was harming inclusion.

Future opportunities

While not a direct outcome of the program, newly appointed heads of biosecurity agencies in both Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are women, and we are anecdotally aware of female participation at all levels in many Pacific biosecurity agencies. This is an opportunity to focus on highlighting and upholding women's leadership roles in biosecurity.

Future program design could consider opportunities for youth inclusion (e.g. making biosecurity career pathways visible) and small-scale operators (e.g. one-step export certificates, including for people using the private passenger pathway). Small exporters are often women consigning craft products or produce travelling with private passengers.

Other areas of focus might include: ensuring that emergency response messaging is inclusive (not just male heads of household); and ensuring that communications plans consider the communication styles of women and "grass roots" as those most affected by pests and diseases.⁴⁸ An easy win might be to include disability-disaggregated data in activity reports so that different capacities to participate in, influence and benefit from program activities can be considered.

⁴⁷ SIBDP Phase Three Program Proposal FINAL.docx, p.11

⁴⁸ For example, African snail damages soil which harms village farmers the most. These farmers need "conversations" more than "comms" when something goes wrong (according to one of our interviewees).

6.2 Climate change

How has PBPP and SIBDP supported partners to address climate change?

The PBPP and SIBDP have indirectly supported partners to address the impacts of climate change through helping to strengthen preparedness of agencies, for example capabilities in surveillance for and identification of pests.

While there is strong recognition amongst stakeholders of increased pest risks linked to climate change (e.g. fall armyworm, red fire ants⁴⁹), it is not clear that climate change needs to be a strong focus for the programs. Climate is a busy space; too much emphasis on climate aspects may risk conflicts with national- and regional-level programs. Instead, if focus is placed on continuous improvement in biosecurity administration, on pest surveillance (including smallholder and village surveillance) and on developing rapid response mechanisms then there will be greater ability of agencies to respond to the additional demands that climate change is putting on movement of pests and diseases.

⁴⁹ Pest risks will increase due to expanding ranges and breeding seasons (rising temperatures will facilitate this), and more severe weather events (with risk of winds bringing in vectors).

7. Key insights and lessons learned

In this section we draw out some key insights and perspectives relevant to the future of the Programs, with implications across effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. These include both strategic and operational considerations across:

- Regional coordination challenges and opportunities
- Designing program intent and focus
- Better understanding program performance
- Special issues for regional technology activities.

Resulting recommendations reflect the authors' perspectives on matters of priority, drawing from evaluation findings and our consideration of wider context.

7.1 Regional coordination challenges and opportunities

One of the key reasons the PBPP was established was to improve regional collaboration and coordination. Stakeholders note that regional coordination did improve since the program's inception but remains a challenge.

Turnover of officials, in PICs and other stakeholders, was noted as a particular pain-point (with known and trusted staff being noted as a key factor in improved relationships between Australia and PICs), requiring flexibility from DAFF.⁵⁰ In this bumpy environment, DAFF's readiness to engage and keenness to help has been noticed by PICs and other stakeholders.

"There has been a lot more engagement with DAFF in the last three years"

PBPP (and, where relevant, SIBDP) will need to make an ongoing effort and commitment to communication. Interviewees made requests for better communication of DAFF's role and what the PBPP may (and may not) fund. The suggestion was for a type of menu of technical support available.

"We aren't aware what activities could be funded by PBPP" "it's very vague where the money comes from" "we have to piece it together"

"We want to coordinate with DAFF better. But that requires a clearer description of the role of DAFF (as separate from their role as an NPPO)"

Communication could be improved if there was a sharper focus on what is being offered and why.

"DAFF have been reactive to opportunities. A bit of flexibility is a good thing but the important gets trumped by the urgent". "We need to know what is important."

There was also concern expressed that DAFF's objectives were overly driving what was delivered:

⁵⁰This included after New Zealand MPI's re-organisation in 2024, where DAFF re-assessed its relative priorities after MPI indicated that some of its programs were to be dis-established.

"We don't know what the Pacific Biosecurity Program is but we don't care about the branding – we just need to understand what our role in delivering the activity is, and how it helps our country."

"We don't want to get sucked down into delivering activities that are not from our workplan"

Interviewees noted that while there has been effort put into achieving better coordination and communication, duplication or overlap between donors continues to create challenges (for example, overlapping goals in export pathway work).⁵¹

Countries also reported being overburdened by multiple, occasionally duplicated, training programs delivered by different donors. This could be straining already limited NPPO staff, "turn the tap down a bit". Others observed some duplication of activities and administrative functions where funded from multiple donors (PHAMA Plus, PACER Plus, SPC), each of whom have separate evaluation and reporting requirements.

Finally, differences in strategic approaches between Australia and New Zealand—one that tends to be more technically focused, the other that is becoming more regulatory systems-oriented—can also generate conflicts and misunderstandings for PICs about where their priorities should lie. Confusion about priorities could harm attempts to work toward regional harmonisation. One interviewee suggested better defining domains, for example, that New Zealand could focus on institutional and border-system matters, whereas Australia could focus on technical and field support for animal and plant health.

One area for potential improvement is the delivery mechanism(s) between the PBPP and regional agencies, including in a wider context of multiple, often concurrent projects. SPC staff when interviewed noted that "we have four funding agreements with DAFF which is very inefficient" and "opaque". Questions were raised over whether the PBPP could consolidate support for SPC in a way that is less of an administrative burden and for the longer term.⁵² One person noted, "One of the struggles we have is that the program is very directed by DAFF and DFAT in Canberra. They decide what money is spent on. That is a big challenge for us; we can't work like that."

There are few fixes for this, aside from potentially gradually increasing the use of core funding to regional or initiative lead agencies when the time is right.⁵³ One possible variation could be to

⁵¹ Some of the duplication has arisen because Australia has been operating in areas traditionally covered by New Zealand (in part, to 'help out' when New Zealand's program funding was cut). In the words of one stakeholder: "Aus is 'on our patch a bit more'... it has made it trickier to see if we are duplicating."

⁵² The suggestion (presumably) was that DFAT direct more support for biosecurity-related goals through Core Funding instead of through the PBPP. This would have the effect of supporting activities identified in regional agencies' strategic plans and having them reported through their results framework(s).

⁵³ Pooled core funding models — where multiple donors contribute to a shared fund with unified reporting — can reduce duplication and burden. Core funding allows recipient organisations to manage resources strategically and report once against a consolidated results framework rather than separately to each donor. See for example: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Aid-Prog-docs/Evaluations/2022/Mid-term-Review-MFAT-SPC-Core-Funding-2020-2024-FINAL-For-Release.pdf>

establish a multi-donor trust fund for thematic areas (e.g. ongoing regional capacity building for PIC biosecurity agencies) with shared oversight and reporting.

Recommendation #1

Continue to engage with PIC governments, SPC, New Zealand and other donors/programs about regional strategies for biosecurity and best uses of available resources for collective impact.

7.2 Designing program intent and focus

Clarifying program intent

Interviews highlighted that mixing foreign policy and “development” goals with the biosecurity goals could have blurred stakeholders’ understanding of both Programs’ goals. This has given rise to different, often informal perceptions of success held by DAFF officials, DFAT officials, partner biosecurity agencies in-country, and other in-country development and diplomatic staff.

There are opportunities to update and hone the program logic (theory of change) and expression of outcomes, and for this to flow through to program planning. The program logic developed for this evaluation would be a good starting point, with provision for intermediate outcomes as well as EOPOs. Consistent with DFAT guidelines, EOPOs should also be better expressed in the form of ‘end states’ than the current set.⁵⁴

Currently, PIC agency improvement or maturity is not an explicit specific objective or outcome intended by the PBPP, although is for SIBDP. If greater PIC biosecurity agency capability (or maturity or sustainability) is a genuine intent, then we would expect to part of the theory of change expressing an outcome like “incremental improvements in biosecurity policy and administration become business as usual” or “institutional and functional capacity strengthened” – and then activities explicitly designed to increase likelihood of achieving that strategic intent. This would emphasise the cycle of learning and improvement that supports PICs to better manage plant and animal disease risks on their own.

Designing and reviewing priority activities

The Programs need to be more strategic towards authentic opportunities for successful system improvement; less reactive to immediate preferences or what can be easily repeated across countries, or high-aspiration change that may not be feasible for all PICs.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ See p.11 of the DFAT Design and MEL Standards in particular.

⁵⁵ Including, at the margin, potentially the preferences of individual DAFF personnel with influence over resources and priorities.

This is especially important when considering that the Programs influence how PICs apply their limited time and resources for related activities.⁵⁶

Representatives from biosecurity agencies – particularly in the less well-resourced countries consulted – typically described their key needs as:

- human resource capability, especially maintaining and incrementally building skills and experience given turnover of career personnel
- SOPs and training content/curricula (not necessarily requiring partners to directly provide training, especially foundational training)
- technical infrastructure (at various levels, including but not limited to higher-cost equipment for X-ray or fumigation).

Into the future, it would be better if regional or country programs were developed with reference to a more explicit and transparent framework of how developed the biosecurity (or wider agriculture regulatory) system is in each PIC or grouping of PICs.⁵⁷ This may assist structured conversations or assessments about:

- strengths and weaknesses, whether regional or PIC-specific
- where improvements have been made through the program or independently, either temporarily or more systemically
- relative priorities for improvement interventions, including where activities or implementation processes might need to vary to better fit local context
- whether there is genuine need for a DAFF-supported response (upholding PIC agencies' independence and self-sufficiency in cases where they could respond independently).⁵⁸
- a clear exit strategy for bilateral partnerships (i.e. know when it is time to leave).

Such a process does not need to be highly elaborate. One method could be a consistent framework, benchmarking tool or assessment matrix for PICs, or Australia with PICs, to more explicitly define their

⁵⁶ For example, while senior biosecurity agency staff benefit from face-to-face training in other countries, this can result in staff away from their principal duties for extended periods of time with sometimes negative consequences.

⁵⁷ For Solomon Islands in particular, the stated needs and aspirations for the five components of 'Sub-Program 1.5: Biosecurity Services' in MAL's *Solomon Islands Agriculture Sector Growth Strategy and Investment Plan 2021–2030* is a good starting point, to the extent needs have not been superseded. See: https://solomons.gov.sb/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Solomon-Islands-Agriculture-Sector-Growth-Strategy-and-Investment-Plan-ASGSIP-2021-2030_Final.pdf

⁵⁸ This might be particularly useful in the context of recent conversations around a potential need for establishing some kind of emergency response facility/ program. Capability/maturity assessment would include whether a country has suitable rapid response mechanisms for situations in which biosecurity risks have become urgent. These are situations in which the country's risk profile has changed quickly and exceeds the response capacity of standing regulatory system. In rapid response situations, a failure to mobilise quickly would lead to economic loss, invasion establishment, or loss of trading confidence. A justified rapid-response facility for PICs would be pre-approved by the PICs and by funders, be pre-designed, and trigger-based. It would focus on short-term containment, stabilisation, and reassurance and clearly hand back responsibility once the immediate risk passes.

level of capability/maturity (or risk) across various aspects of being a Pacific biosecurity agency or market access and trade agency..⁵⁹

This could also be extended into *regional* biosecurity systems, identifying what regional-level activities would have genuine impact on all or most PIC agencies. Indeed, agency-level benchmarking could be done as a regional process including with SPC and New Zealand agencies (provided the PICs agreed).

A further opportunity might be to reframe the Regional Biosecurity Support work into three sub-streams: (a) biosecurity diagnostics and administrative strengthening (which is bilateral and medium term), (b) biosecurity operational training (regional, but delivered for particular countries, multi-stakeholder) and (c) one-off technical assistance to implement new technology or pest surveillance (grants or activities, multi-stakeholder).

Recommendation #2

Monitoring could include introducing a biosecurity agency ‘maturity model’ or similar, appropriate to the Pacific, to more transparently and objectively identify local or regional needs and assess the extent of change over time. A maturity model could help with intervention planning, training needs assessments and assessments of rapid response systems.

Recommendation #3

If resourcing stays similar to current levels, PBPP (and potentially SIBDP) should be clearer that it is only able to offer a narrow portfolio of projects, what those projects are, and what Australia’s interest is in them.

Building on systems of culture and trusted relationships

Reflecting on Pacific systems of culture (see section 3.2), one success so far is that the Programs have emphasised relationships, trust-based collaboration and peer learning: this is a significant and useful shift when compared to many other programs of this nature. Socio-cultural and political familiarity can accelerate learning and reform where formal mechanisms alone may be insufficient.

The most recent ICC for SIBDP (who has Pacific heritage) has operated proactively with cultural nous and influence across agencies, industry and other stakeholders, which has likely contributed positively to SIBDP outcomes.

⁵⁹ Anecdotally, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) are trialling an evaluation tool that may become available in 2026 for implementation.

Going forward, it may be important to plan for and track not only policy alignment and regulatory improvements, but also institutional and informal relationships.⁶⁰

Initiatives are more likely to gain traction when they build on existing cultural and political relationships rather than relying solely on regional or Australia-driven harmonisation mechanisms. This is not to say that pan-Pacific approaches are not valuable; indeed, Samoa has drawn on peer learning from Melanesian countries, particularly Fiji.⁶¹

In summary, the Programs should:

- continue to recognise the goal of relationship-building and as far as possible work through established regional, cultural and political relationships (e.g. Melanesia Spearhead Group networks or trusted bilateral arrangements)
- continue to prioritise peer-to-peer learning mechanisms and South-South learning and institutional partnerships like technical exchanges, secondments, and joint assessments.

Increasing program focus on sustainability

DFAT and New Zealand MFAT evaluations repeatedly underline that trusted relationships – including long-term advisers, regional partnerships, and consistent engagement – enable more responsive programming than short-term transactional models.

- Programs with stable funding horizons and continuity of personnel are typically better able to respond to sensitive or evolving needs.
- Longer term programs have been better able to build durable partnerships informed by continuous learning.

Both PBPP and SIBDP have been funded as multi-year programs within the DFAT program management and governance cycle, although funding is typically confirmed to DAFF on a year-by-year basis with an approved program of activities. While DFAT's need for design and implementation to remain flexible around funding and geostrategic/geopolitical priorities is acknowledged, short-term funding cycles can hinder long-term planning. DAFF could potentially better design program activities if DFAT budget (or at least, a minimum budget envelope) were confirmed on a rolling two-year basis, as opposed to a year-by-year.

SIBDP's use of in-country embedded long-term advisers is likely to create benefits that are sustained over a longer period, subject to approved balance between advice and doing. While programs with embedded long-term advisers are comparatively expensive, the cost may be justified by the sustained organisational strengthening that occurs.

More rigorous design and planning about how program activities can build legacy and sustainability could be pursued. For example, with respect to training:

⁶⁰ For example, biosecurity networks that are building between Fiji and Solomon Islands, and Samoa and Fiji.

⁶¹ For instance, ongoing technical exchanges with Fiji have supported improvements in pest list management and policy dialogue aligned to international standards.

- Using South-to-South peer learning is a good way to embed systems into culture and norms. Stakeholders encouraged DAFF continue to look regionally for training support. For example, Biosecurity officials in Fiji noted that engagement with Solomon Islands and Vanuatu is often more straightforward than with countries outside the Melanesian group, as systems and ways of working are perceived as more closely aligned.
- Stakeholders were in full support of continuing to develop a “train-the-trainer” model, with local and regional trainers well resourced and equipped to deliver ongoing support.

As biosecurity systems in each country mature, PIC biosecurity agencies may require support to *identify* priority areas for improvement and to develop approaches for funding these improvements internally – as opposed to relying on Australia or other donors to fund or drive implementation. This may include specialist technical input, but not ongoing activity funding.

If PICs are to be genuine biosecurity partners, we would expect to see stronger encouragement for PIC agencies to rely on national budget allocations for business-as-usual biosecurity service delivery, or to explore fee-for-service models where appropriate.

We would also expect greater dialogue and support for strengthening the broader biosecurity regulatory system – including local stakeholder perspectives driving higher expectations for their government agencies.

For example, there is now more scope for increased recognition of the role of private incentives—such as those affecting shipping lines—in improving container cleanliness, pest interception rates, and certification processes. It was therefore encouraging to see private incentives identified as a key future direction for the shipping container work.⁶² Also notable is the participation of the private sector at the market access training sessions (including producers, exporters and treatment providers), which provides the opportunity to promote understanding of the key drivers for each sector and foster cooperation in addressing biosecurity issues around market access and safe trade.

Recommendation #4

Contingent on resources, continue to uphold relationship-building as a core priority for the Programs, but with more specificity about the role of South-to-South partnerships, technical exchanges and joint assessments and Australia’s role in those partnerships.

7.3 Better understanding program performance

Program documentation (including activity and annual reports) was prepared consistently and to a satisfactory standard, indicating compliance with basic reporting requirements and enabling routine performance tracking.

However, we observed weak alignment to the theory of change, results matrices, and defined indicators—constraining the evaluability of outputs and outcomes and limiting the ability to

⁶² DAFF Activity Report, Sea Containers Activity Report 2022-23.

triangulate evidence against program objectives. For example, the Programs had no result framework(s) developed in their initial stages, or revised over time.⁶³ This gap has been recognised by DAFF program staff and is being worked-on.

Continuing to encourage a focus on outcomes will be important for communication, partnerships and to guide challenging decisions. Ongoing dialogue amongst key stakeholders about what the programs are genuinely achieving should be baked-into program processes.

- Strengthening the explicit connection between activity reporting and the MEL framework (including indicator reference sheets, baselines, and targets) is therefore essential to support credible monitoring, learning, and adaptive management in line with DFAT expectations and better practice. Monitoring and evaluation should, of course, be proportionate to the resources applied for the program.
- It may be appropriate to reduce the activity-level monitoring burden and instead focus on evaluative insight from repeated country-level diagnostics (or similar) – a shifting in balance towards more of a focus on outcomes achieved and possibly less detail on activities undertaken.
- DAFF and DFAT could also explore opportunities for more cross-program learning by sharing reflections with and by implementing partners. Evidence of results (particularly higher-order outcomes and impacts) – or even just informed discussion and exchange about perceptions of results – is an important way to create influence with partners and guide challenging conversations on priorities.

In addition, as Pacific biosecurity-related programs update design and enter a new phase, preparing a GEDSI analytical framework would be expected.⁶⁴ At a minimum, there should be clearer articulation of the inequalities that investment needs to respond to. Findings from the analytical process should be used to: ensure that the investment does no harm; identify priority areas of action in the design; and enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of overall program outcomes.

Recommendation #5

Establish a clear and proportionate monitoring and evaluation plan for future Pacific biosecurity partnering or participation that applies the DFAT Design and MEL Standards and the GEDSI Analysis Good Practice Note. EOPOs should also be better expressed in the form of 'end states' than the current set.

7.4 Special issues for regional technology challenges

⁶³ The Communication and Engagement Plan does include some baseline metrics relating to awareness, but nothing was developed to measure relationships between Australia and PIC agencies, or relationships between PIC agencies, for example. No relationship baseline data was collated.

⁶⁴ GEDSI analysis is compulsory under DFAT's GEDSI analysis Good Practice Note if DFAT's investment in the next Phase is over \$3 million <dfat.gov.au>.

Regional technology activities are lagging, with care needed for next steps, particularly given the significant costs involved.

ePhyto solution

A regional standards focus has been implementation of the IPPC ePhyto Solution. There are many stated (potential) benefits of this system, including reducing the administrative costs associated with the high number of forms manually filled in and eliminating repetitive recoding of information. ePhyto systems reduce the human error in transcription and recording and allows change to be tracked. Treatment systems can also be incorporated.

There has been pressure to expand ePhyto across Pacific states, driven by continued GeNS support, regional donor programs (e.g. Pacific ePhyto initiatives) and IPPC Hub outreach.⁶⁵ While ePhyto readiness is extremely uneven across the region, more Pacific countries are indicating interest in onboarding via GeNS and regional programs. For example, Solomon Islands has been undergoing GeNS onboarding and readiness activities.

Alongside SPC and others, the PBPP helped to fund workshops to share experiences from early adopters Fiji, Samoa and the Cook Islands.⁶⁶ In many ways, these workshops helped to highlight the reasons why ePhyto uptake in PICs may be slow. The challenge reflects a mix of technical, financial, institutional and trade-related factors (all of which were acknowledged to us by PBPP staff, SPC and the NPPOs themselves).

Agencies may over-estimate the importance of implementing ePhyto systems relative to other (less exciting) agency-strengthening activities. PIC officials are pulled across many agency functions, there is questionable value in PIC officials attending GeNS training and rollout events when ePhyto is not realistic for that country in the short term. Ideally, training and workshop invitation lists should be linked to an evaluation of readiness (not necessarily the IPPC's more formal assessment of readiness).⁶⁷

However, the case for keeping well-designed ePhyto activities as part of the PBPP for PICs in the future is very strong, particularly as Australia begins to accept ePhytos from a broader set of countries and international momentum builds.

Pest List Database

⁶⁵ IPPC reporting indicates more countries registering and more regular users: as of 30 Sept 2024, some 134 countries were registered to the IPPC ePhyto Hub (many via GeNS). That demonstrates global momentum. See: https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2024/10/09_IC_2024_Nov_ePhyto_activities_and_workplan_2024-10-24.pdf

⁶⁶ Within the Pacific region, a handful of PICs have adopted the IPPC ePhyto Solution using either the Hub or the GeNS: Fiji went live in mid-2020 and has since exchanged many thousands of ePhytos with partners (notably New Zealand); Samoa also went live (around 2020); the Cook Islands adopted the IPPC ePhyto Solution in 2022, which allows it to import products from Australia and New Zealand with ease.

⁶⁷ For example, readiness could be observed by looking at a country's progress towards adopting customs/single-window systems (e.g. ASYCUDA) and at the freight systems in use.

The PBPP's co-investment in improving the PLD⁶⁸ to make it more accessible, up-to-date and integrated with broader biosecurity information systems across the Pacific has not met the goals set for it – yet. Despite the establishment and recent upgrades to the PLD, uptake and routine use by Pacific biosecurity agencies has been limited. Further improvements are coming including with PBPP support in 2025–26 and 2026–27 with a view to greater impact, and DAFF overseeing delivery.⁶⁹

Before intervention from the PBPP and others,⁷⁰ many practitioners in PICs were unaware of the database's existence or potential value, and national pest lists were maintained independently and often only shared when specifically requested, rather than updated continuously into the PLD. This meant that, even though the PLD now hosts tens of thousands of pest records and can support trade, border decisions and surveillance activities, many countries still lack the habit, training or systems to consistently enter and retrieve data from the platform.

There remain gaps in PLD data currency and maintenance. Some national pest records are not up-to-date or fully reflected in the database, reducing confidence in the PLD as a source for market access and risk assessment. The database's presentation and search functionality is perceived as not particularly user-friendly (a remark made to us many times in interviews). There remain questions of whether Australia's pest information should be included, or not.⁷¹

Ongoing support aimed at embedding practices that sustain ongoing use of the upgraded PLD may be needed. For example, training practices that demonstrate the database's use by Pacific agencies as part of real-world trade facilitation rather than just a database. PICs are responsible for uploading their own pest data, which requires ongoing surveillance capacity, validation of identifications, and dedicated efforts to keep lists current — functions that many countries still need support to sustain. Additionally, legacy practices of restricted access to certain pest information and uneven technical infrastructure are likely to be barriers to routine use. If history is any predictor of the future, then SPC's ability to promote these practices to PICs will be constrained by both funding and staff.

Remote diagnostics and electronic risk auditing

Accurate and quick identification of plant pests and diseases is an essential component of effective biosecurity and is best done in-country. A mechanism must be found that supports PICs with easier ways to conduct pest and disease identifications, without relying overly on foreign experts. This is because regular surveillance of crops is essential to monitor current national pest status and intercept new pest incursions as early as possible. Remote diagnostics and digital identification are revolutionising biosecurity by enabling swift, accurate, on-site detection and expert input.

⁶⁸ Secretariat of the Pacific Community. (n.d.). PLD [Database description]. <https://brb.sprep.org/pacific-islands-pest-list-database-pld>

⁶⁹ An MoU between DAFF and SPC has been drafted, the focus of which is an upgrade to the database. Under that agreement, the PBPP (DAFF) will be directly responsible for managing the financial administration of the upgrade project including contracting an identified supplier deemed suitable to execute the proposed upgrades and manage the contract delivery.

⁷⁰ In addition to PBPP, regional workshops and training events were funded by the SAFE Pacific project, supported by SPC, DAFF and New Zealand MPI.

⁷¹ Australia does not directly enter pest records for other countries into the database as a national contributor. The database is designed primarily to contain records of pests and hosts as reported by PICs themselves via their national administrators, with the SPC acting as custodian of the portal.

A near-term opportunity could be linking microscopes in Pacific countries to remote experts for live pest identification. Remote networks could provide a cost-effective, rapid approach that supports plant and animal health diagnostics and training, making the system more sustainable. This is contingent on there being good connectivity and network stability for remote areas, which may not always be the case. Microscope availability and maintenance (to provide adequate images to experts) is another consideration.

Another opportunity to explore is portable diagnostics. In plant health, portable diagnostics are transforming surveillance. Handheld analysers, lab-on-chip systems, and smartphone-integrated biosensors are providing high-accuracy, on-site pathogen detection via nucleic acid amplification and immunoassays. These tools, often enhanced with Internet of Things and machine learning, dramatically shorten diagnosis time and support real-time disease monitoring in the field. However, challenges remain around sensitivity, durability, regulatory compliance, and field deployment logistics.

Recommendation #6

Before investing further in regional electronic systems-related work (e.g. ePhyto or PLD) review whether complementary 'soft' activities (people- and process- focussed) are required to realise timely benefits.

Appendix A Key internal resources

Key internal information (mostly DAFF) drawn on for this evaluation is outlined below. This list is not necessarily comprehensive.

Year	Annual workplans and reports	Activity plans and reports	Additional documents /outputs
2019-20	2019-20 PBPP Final report	2019 20 ePhyto activity plan	Report - Leaves and vegetables - Fiji - January 2020 – Final Pacific-breadfruit-final-report
2020-21	2020-21 PBPP Final report 2020-21 project plan	2020 – 21 Comms strategy activity plan	PLD published communications PLD _project IPPC presentation
2021-22	2021-22 work plan 2021-22 PBPP Final report	2021-22 Activity Plan Comms Strategy 2021- 22 Activity Plan Pacific Export Pathway 2021- 22 Activity Plan PHAMA contact point 2021- 22 Activity Plan PLD Phase 2 2021- 22 Activity Plan Sea Containers 2021- 22 Activity Plan Program Management 2021- 22 Activity Plan ePhyto Pacific	Final report Fiji PEP Pilot June July 2022 Pacific engagement and comms network meeting 27.4.22docx Pacific Capsicum Final report PECN Terms of reference April 2022
2022-23	2022 – 23 Annual report 2022 – 23 PBPP workplan	2022- 23 Activity Plan Activity Plan_ePhyto +PLD 2022- 23 Activity Plan PTMA Support 2022- 23 Activity Plan PBPP PEP Activity Plan 2022- 23 Activity Plan PBPP Sea Containers Reporting	PPPO ePhyto - Cook Islands FINAL report 06092022 DAFF-PHAMA-Plus-MoU signed PECN Meeting Minutes_060722 – FINAL 2023 Trip report – fresh taro from Samoa SPC PLD User Manual - Training purpose Attachment 1 - PLD Country Administrators Workshop & Training 2023 Report Evaluation forms Fiji PEP training PECN Meeting Minutes - February 2023 PECN Meeting Minutes – May 2023

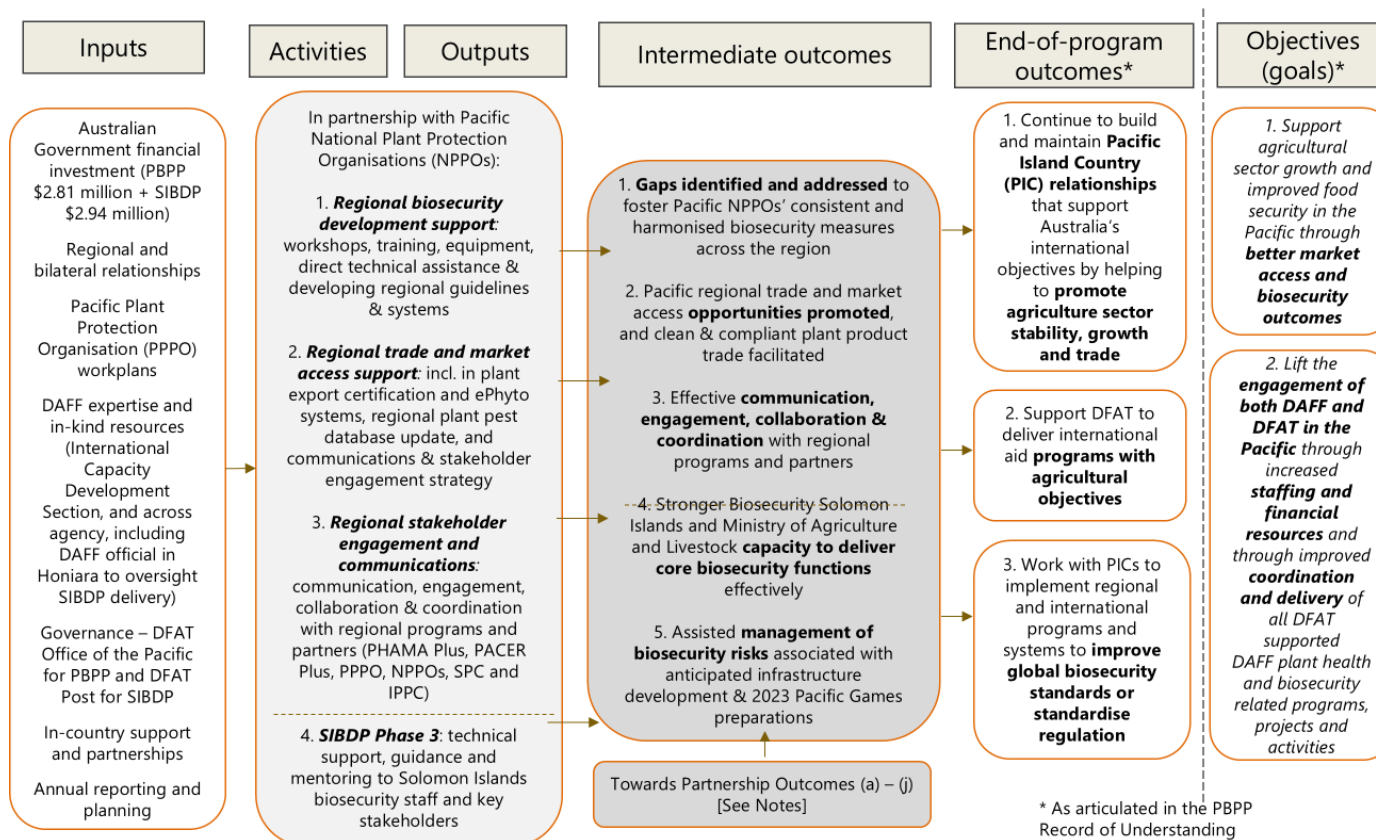
Year	Annual workplans and reports	Activity plans and reports	Additional documents /outputs
2023-24	2023-24 PBPP Work plan 2023 – 24 PBPP Annual report	2023- 24 PBPP activity plan Pacific Export Pathway 2023- 24 PBPP Activity Plan Sea containers 2023- 24 PBPP Activity Plan Vanuatu Trade Support 2023- 24 PBPP Activity Plan AFAS training activity plan 2023- 24 PBPP Activity Plan PTMA Support 2023- 24 PBPP Activity Plan Communication Strategy Activity Plan 2023- 24 PBPP Activity Plan Sea containers activity plan	Trip report – fresh taro from Samoa – November 2023 2023-24 training feedback survey – Pacific export pathway Vanuatu Final - Operational Work Plan - Fresh horticulture exports from Vanuatu to Australia - V1.0 Solomon Islands Export Pathway Training Feedback Survey
2024-25	2024-25 PBPP Workplan Report not due until 2026	2024 –25 Sea Containers Activity planning	AFAS Training (Vanuatu activity) TRIP REPORT - PNG AFAS Training (Vanuatu activity) TRIP REPORT - PNG (2) Pacific Export Pathway Training Trip Report Vanuatu 2025 Trip report QRM Final PEP Project Summary (September 2024) Letter - DAFF to BV - Finalising the operational work plan for limes to Australia Draft Pacific pest list – stage 1 DRAFT Pacific Strategy Sea Container Strategy PLD ExCo Decision Paper_18.2.25 2025 AFAS Training (Vanuatu activity) TRIP REPORT – PNG_2 2025 AFAS Training (Vanuatu activity) TRIP REPORT – PNG 2025 DRAFT Pacific pest list - stage 1 version.xlsx

Appendix B Program logic

This program logic was developed by Sapere with the ERG in September 2025 as part of the approved Evaluation Plan. This was the first program logic developed for the program(s). The content is based in part on stated outcomes in the Record of Understanding between DFAT and DAFF.

Program logic

Pacific Biosecurity Partnership Program (PBPP) (Jan 2020 to October 2025)
Solomon Islands Biosecurity Development Program (SIBDP) phase 3 (January 2022 to June 2025)



Notes

PBPP 'Partnership outcomes' (section 3.3 of Record of Understanding Activity Schedule)

Targeting Australian Government internal coordination

- (g) Improved internal management arrangements within DFAT and DAFF to ensure that issues related to Pacific agricultural market access and biosecurity are appropriately coordinated, prioritised and addressed.
- (b) Improved coordination and collaboration between DFAT and DAFF in relation to Pacific market access and biosecurity matters. This will include enhanced consultation, coordination and collaboration with significant Australian aid funded programs such as PHAMA Plus and PACER Plus Implementation package.
- (d) Delivery of Australia's PACER Plus commitment

Targeting Pacific regional coordination

- (h) Improved sharing of market access status information and biosecurity compliance performance information between DFAT and DAFF and other relevant stakeholders.
- (i) Improved strategic operational and technical coordination with other key bilateral and multilateral actors in the Pacific, particularly New Zealand.
- (j) Increased engagement in the Pacific for biosecurity and market access activities and increased bilateral and multilateral engagement with Pacific regional and country/territory level organisations.

Targeting the experience of Pacific Island Countries

- (a) Development and delivery of competency-based biosecurity management and operation training and capacity building programs in TL, PNG, SI and Vanuatu based on best practice and consistent with international and regional standards.
- (e) Completion of long-standing risk analysis requests that are a high priority for a number of PI countries.
- (f) Providing support to PI countries to reduce non-compliance and support market maintenance when accessing the Australian market. This will reduce wastage and remedial costs, boosting the return to rural communities and small exporter businesses through targeted activities in collaboration with National Plant Protection Organisations for specific identified import pathways. Proactive and timely communication with PI countries will support market maintenance.
- (c) Improved opportunities for PI farmers and exporters to access markets in Australia and other countries, boosting incomes to rural communities.

Note: Informal categorisation and ordering by Sapere, intended to assist understanding

Appendix C Methodology notes

Methodology note: Detailed evaluation questions

These detailed Evaluation Questions were approved by the ERG on 18 September 2025, within the Evaluation Plan.

Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs)	Sub-questions
Effectiveness: Were programs funded under the PBPP agreement (PBPP and SIBDP) effective in achieving overarching EOPOs?	• What has the program delivered to date, and is expected to be delivered by its end? Consider program activities/streams and progress towards: ○ intermediate outcomes ▪ Gaps identified and addressed to foster Pacific NPPOs' consistent and harmonised biosecurity measures across the region ▪ Pacific regional trade and market access opportunities promoted, and clean & compliant plant product trade facilitated ▪ Effective communication, engagement, collaboration & coordination with regional programs and partners ▪ Stronger BSI and MAL capacity to deliver core biosecurity functions effectively ▪ Assisted management of biosecurity risks associated with anticipated infrastructure development & 2023 Pacific Games preparations ○ EOPOs ▪ Continue to build and maintain PIC relationships that support Australia's international objectives by helping to promote agriculture sector stability, growth and trade ▪ Support DFAT to deliver international aid programs with agricultural objectives ▪ Work with PICs to implement regional and international programs and systems to improve global biosecurity standards or standardise regulation • Were there any parts of the program where effectiveness was limited in relation to the outcomes? Or which hindered the outcomes? • To what extent did the Programs support regional collaboration, coordination and information sharing between regional programs and organisations in regard to biosecurity, trade and market access?

Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs)	Sub-questions
Efficiency: Did the investments make appropriate and efficient use of Australia's and our partners' time and resources to achieve intended outcomes?	• What did the programs cost during the period under review? • To what extent and in what ways was the program delivered efficiently? • Any Value for Money insights? Opportunities for efficiency?
Sustainability: To what extent have the Programs contributed to the development of sustainable improvements in the biosecurity system, market access and trade capability in the Pacific region?	• To what extent are the outcomes of program activities likely to be sustained by stakeholders in the Pacific or benefits continued? • Were appropriate mechanisms and partnerships established to support the long-term sustainability of outcomes? • To what extent have factors like local ownership, policy environment and resource availability influenced the sustainability of program outcomes?
GEDSI: How has PBPP advanced inclusive development?	• What allowances, if any, were made for socially disadvantaged groups in the delivery or design of the program? • How could the program allow for tailored interventions or special attention to socially disadvantaged groups in ways that allow them to enjoy program benefits equally with others in that community/population or organisation?
Climate Change: How has PBPP supported partners to address climate change?	• To what extent has the program equipped participants with skills/ capabilities to anticipate and respond to biosecurity challenges exacerbated by climate change? • What allowances, if any, were made for the impacts of climate change in the delivery or design of the program?
Identifying Key Insights and Lessons Learned	• What are the key barriers and challenges to regional collaboration, coordination and information sharing in regard to biosecurity, trade and market access? • What opportunities exist to strengthen consistent and collaborative biosecurity, trade and market access opportunities in the Pacific? • What critical gaps remain to strengthening Pacific biosecurity, food security and support agricultural sector growth? • Were there any unintended positive or negative consequences of the program's initiatives that provide valuable insights?

Source: Evaluation Plan, final 18 September 2025

Methodology note: valuing in-kind contributions

In-kind contributions from Australian Government agencies were included in the evaluation to provide a more picture of the total investment in the program. It is assumed that non-Australian Government resources were not additional to the program, and therefore not included.

In-kind contributions were identified by DAFF through program documentation, financial reports, and consultation with implementing partners.

- **Staff time** was estimated using the relevant agency salary scale (plus on-costs) for the staff member's classification, multiplied by the proportion of time dedicated to the program.
- **Facilities and equipment** were valued at either their replacement cost or an equivalent commercial rental rate.

All program related equipment and consumables were funded through the program and activity budgets and included in financial costs for those activities.

Where exact values could not be determined, conservative estimates were applied, and the basis for calculation documented. These in-kind contributions were reported separately from financial contributions, and aggregated to present the overall scale of investment.

This approach aligns with DFAT's 2023 Design and MEL Standards, ensuring transparency, consistency, and comparability across evaluations.

Appendix D Stakeholder interviews

As part of this evaluation, between October and December 2025 Sapere performed around 30 interviews with stakeholders from across the Australian Government, Pacific Island Countries, cooperating entities and others. This included in-country interviews between late October and mid-November 2025.

Table 14: Stakeholder organisations and entities

Grouping	Agency/ Organisation
Australian Government	DFAT DAFF
Pacific Island Countries	Fiji (Biosecurity Authority of Fiji) Samoa (Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Samoa) Solomon Islands (BSI, MAL) Vanuatu (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, and Biosecurity Vanuatu) Cook Island (Ministry of Agriculture)
Cooperating entities	SPC – Land Resources Division / PPPO PHAMA Plus PACER Plus Implementation Unit New Zealand MPI
Other	Private sector agricultural and horticultural exporters and suppliers

Table 15: Stakeholders that were interviewed

Name	Country based in	Role and organisation
Alipate Tavo	Samoa	Trade and Investment Advisor, PACER Plus Implementation Unit
Ben Power	Australia	DFAT, Office of the Pacific
Bob Pollard	Solomon Islands	Owner of KOSI, Private Sector
Bonnie Learmonth	Australia	DAFF, PBPP Program Manager
Bronwyn Wiseman	Australia	Technical Director, Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Plus (PHAMA Plus)
Chris Dale	Australia	Director International Capacity Development Section, DAFF
Crispus Fanai	Solomon Islands	Chief Biosecurity Officer, BSI
Dan Edson	Australia	Senior Veterinary Officer, Pacific Engagement Program for Animal Health, Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer, DAFF

Name	Country based in	Role and organisation
Emily Lamberton	Australia	Assistant Director, Pacific Engagement and International Plant Health, DAFF
Emily Tumukon	Vanuatu	Country Manager – Vanuatu, PHAMA Plus
Jean Eroa	Solomon Islands	Director, BSI
Karen Till	Vanuatu	First Secretary, Pacific Network, Australian Border Force
Latitia Chow	Australia	DFAT, Office of the Pacific
Lilly Fatdal	Vanuatu	Director, Biosecurity Vanuatu
Lindon Tari	Vanuatu	Principal Biosecurity Officer, Biosecurity Vanuatu
Lonny Bong	Vanuatu	Director, Department of Livestock
Meg Somers	Samoa	Second Secretary – Political and Economic, DFAT
Mel Lousi	New Zealand	Pacific Programmes Manager, MPI
Michelle Bond	Samoa	Inspector Pacific (Offshore) Network, Australian Border Force
Moana Kelly	Solomon Islands	Officer in Charge (OIC) Airports, BSI
Nacanieli Waqa	New Zealand / Fiji	MPI & PPPO representative
Nafanua Malele	Samoa	Principal Biosecurity Officer, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
Piriariki Maa	Cook Islands	National Programs & Support, Ministry of Agriculture, Cook Islands
Rama Karri	Australia	Director International Collaborations, Sea Container Program lead, DAFF
Rebecca Hislop	New Zealand	Relationship and Policy Advisor, MPI
Robert Osbourne	Vanuatu	Exporter
Samson Viulu	Solomon Islands	Director-General, MAL
Semy Siakimotu	Solomon Islands	SIBDP Program Manager, International Capacity Development Section, DAFF
Seumalo Afele Faiilagi	Samoa	Biosecurity Assistant CEO, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
Sophie Peterson	Australia	DAFF Pacific Engagement Lead for Plant/ACPPPO - PPPO Representative.
Steward Teoga	Solomon Islands	Head of Operations, BSI
Tiresa Po'e	Samoa	Program Manager, Private Sector Partnership, DFAT

Name	Country based in	Role and organisation
Tristan Armstrong	Solomon Islands	Counsellor – Human Development & Agriculture, DFAT – Solomon Islands Post
Wale Tobata	Solomon Islands	Private sector
Zac Lombardo	Vanuatu	First Secretary, DFAT – Vanuatu Post

Appendix E Key program activities

Pacific Biosecurity Partnership Program

Activity	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
PHAMA Technical Market Access Requests	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
Implementation of IPPC GeNS in the South West Pacific Countries	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
Pacific Export Pathway Operational Training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pacific Island Regional Plant Pest List Database (PLD), including upgrade and regional platform endorsed through the PPPO	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
Regional Trade and Market Access Communication Strategy	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
Pacific Plant Trade and Market Access Support	-	-	-	✓	✓	-
PHAMA Plus and PACER Plus contact point			✓	-	-	-
Pacific Communications and Engagement Project	-	-	-	-	-	✓
PPBP Program Management (Coordination and Engagement)	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Keeping sea containers clean: training package	-	-	✓	-	-	-
Sea Containers: Offshore Quality Systems	-	-	-	✓	✓	-
Pacific Regional Sea Container Strategy	-	-	-	-	-	✓
AFAS training in PNG	-	-	-	✓	✓	-
Animal health activities	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Regional Plant Health Surveillance	-	-	-	-	-	✓
PPPO Annual Work Plan Project	-	-	-	-	-	✓
Vanuatu Border Biosecurity Operational Support Project	-	-	-	-	-	✓
Vanuatu Animal Health and Livestock Support Project	-	-	-	-	-	✓

PBPP activity timeline

2019–2020:

- Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment [predecessor to DAFF] Australian Chief Plant Protection Office signed Activity Schedule 88 on 1 April 2020 with DFAT
- PHAMA Technical Market Access Requests
- Early adopters: Samoa and Fiji started using the ePhyto Generic National System (GeNS)
- Pacific Export Pathway project started. Breadfruit and taro protocols developed for Fiji, Samoa, Tonga

2020–2021:

- Readiness assessments for ePhyto expanded to Tranche 1 countries (not all named, but beyond Samoa and Fiji)
- Program scope widened to include Timor-Leste, PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu
- DAFF enters MoU with PHAMA Plus
- Pacific Export Pathway Operational Training
- Pacific Island Pest List database (PLD) project with SPC
- Regional Trade and Market Access Communication Strategy

2021–2022:

- GeNS implemented in Cook Islands and Marshall Islands
- Export Pathway training piloted in Fiji
- PHAMA Plus and PACER Plus contact points established
- Pacific Export Pathway training development and testing
- Regional Plant Pest List Database project continues
- Regional Trade and Market Access Communications Strategy
- Keeping sea containers clean: training package

2022–2023:

- Pacific Export Pathway Operational training delivered in Fiji and Samoa
- AFAS fumigation training in PNG
- Sea container offshore quality systems introduced in Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Nauru
- Pacific Plant Trade and Market Access Support
- Implementation of GeNS Regional and upgrade of the Plant Pest List Database
- Regional Trade and Market Access Communications Strategy

2023–2024:

- Export Pathway training extended to Samoa, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands
- Market access support visits to Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands
- Regional Trade and Market Access Communications Strategy
- Pacific Export Pathway Operational Training
- Pacific Plant Trade and Market Access Support
- Sea Containers: Offshore Quality Systems
- Animal health activities

- AFAS training of trainers and accreditation
- Implementation of Generic e-Phyto National Systems (GeNS)

2024–2025:

- Samoa Crop Pest Survey
- Cook Islands Crop Pest survey
- Sea container strategy workshop attended by 18 PICs; Strategy released
- Export Pathway training in Solomon Islands
- Pacific Export Pathway Workshop Training Project continues
- Pacific Communications and Engagement Project
- PPPO Annual Work Plan Project
- Vanuatu Border Biosecurity Operational Support Project
- Vanuatu Animal Health and Livestock Support Project
- Pacific Regional Sea Container Strategy Project

Examples of program activities across Pacific countries

The table illustrates examples of relevant PBPP (and SIBDP Phase 3) activities across PICs. It is not a comprehensive list of activities undertaken, in individual countries and at regional-level. It does include activities jointly funded with other organisations.

Pacific Island Country or Territory	Examples of relevant PBPP and SIBDP Phase 3 activities
Cook Islands	• Plant health surveys conducted. • Participants attended PEP training in Apia (2023). • Began sending/receiving ePhyto certificates (2023–24).
Fiji	• Participated in AFAS training (via regional participation in PNG 2023). • July 2023: DAFF technical visit to support market access workplan for fresh chilies and fresh breadfruit exports to Australia. • Included in DAFF import risk analysis for fresh capsicum (completed 2021). • Participated in PEP training (Apia 2023). • Fiji hosted the June 2023 Pacific PLD upgrade workshop. • Fiji designated as a GeNS lead country (2023). • Fiji began sending/receiving ePhyto certificates (2023–24). • Australia exchanged ePhyto certificates with Fiji for horticulture and grain exports (Nov 2023). • Supported to attend July 2023 International Sea Container workshop (one of six PIC NPPOs).
Marshall Islands	• Supported to attend July 2023 International Sea Container workshop
Niue	• Participants attended PEP training in Apia (2023).
Nauru	• Supported to attend July 2023 International Sea Container workshop.

Pacific Island Country or Territory	Examples of relevant PBPP and SIBDP Phase 3 activities
Palau	Supported to attend July 2023 International Sea Container workshop.
Papua New Guinea	- AFAS training delivered in PNG (Feb–Mar 2023) with 24 participants, scheduled again for May 2025. - Development and promotion of Offshore sea container Quality Systems (OQS), including the Sea Container Hygiene System. - OQS progression activities (Oct–Dec 2023) with NAQIA, PNG Ports Corporation, PACER Plus. - Included in DAFF import risk analysis for fresh capsicum (2021).
Samoa	- Plant health surveys conducted. - November 2023 DAFF technical visit to support re-entry of fresh taro into Australian market. - Included in DAFF import risk analysis for fresh capsicum (2021). - PEP full program delivered in Apia (Nov 2023). - Computers procured for Samoa's GeNS implementation. - Samoa began sending/receiving ePhyto certificates (2023–24). - Supported to attend July 2023 International Sea Container workshop.
Solomon Islands	- See activities under SIBDP Phase 3 (section below). - Animal health surveys and poultry disease investigations supported. - PEP operational training (October 2024). - Included in DAFF import risk analysis for fresh capsicum (2021). - Supported to attend July 2023 International Sea Container workshop.
Tokelau	Participants attended PEP training in Apia (2023).
Tonga	- Plant health surveys conducted. - Included in DAFF import risk analysis for fresh capsicum (2021). - Participants attended PEP training in Apia (2023).
Vanuatu	- Border operational training. - Animal health and livestock technical training. - AFAS training participation supported for 2025. - Animal health and poultry disease investigations supported. - PEP operational training delivered in April 2024. - Border biosecurity operational training (2025) - Animal health & livestock technical training (2025–26) - Included in DAFF import risk analysis for fresh capsicum (2021).

SIBDP Phase 3

SIBDP Phase 3 was approved from December 2021

Activity	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Equipment Purchases + New BSI Uniforms + Australia donated surveillance, IT, safety and laboratory equipment	✓	-	-	-
SIBDP In country team engaged	✓	-	-	-
A data management workshop	✓	-	-	-
Plant pest and disease survey preparation	✓	-	-	-
Updating the BSI Communication Strategy	✓	-	-	-
Induction Refresher Training + Development of a Biosecurity Training Program	✓	-	-	-
Feasibility study for a Post Entry Quarantine facility for dogs and cats	✓	-	-	-
Marine Vessels Surveillances	-	✓	-	-
Military Vessels Protocol	-	✓	-	-
National Priority Plant Pest List	-	✓	-	-
Animal Health Survey	-	✓	-	-
Plant pest and disease survey	-	✓	-	-
BSI Provincial Training	-	✓	-	-
Public Prosecution Training for BSI	-	✓	-	-
Fumigation dialogues with BSI and Solomon Islands Ports Association	-	✓	-	-
BSI and SIBDP facilitated the gazetting of 23 MAL-Extension Officers	-	✓	-	-
Comms: Raising BSI Visibility, Facebook Page, Internet page	-	✓	-	-
BSI Communication Campaign – air travellers and airport	-	✓	-	-
SI Customs Biosecurity Awareness Program	-	✓	-	-
Public Service Induction Training	-	✓	-	-
AFAS Training	-	✓	-	-
BSI Induction Training	-	✓	-	-
African Swine Fever Risk Pathways in Choiseul & Shortlands	-	✓	-	-
DAFF Short Term Advisor in country (Duncan Sneddon) - biosecurity management plan for the Pacific Games	-	✓	✓	-

Activity	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Pacific Games preparation	-	✓	✓	-
Asian Subterranean Termite - Delimitation, identification and data management	-	-	-	✓
Biosecurity Farm Guidelines	-	-	-	✓
Gazette of MAL Additional Staff	-	-	-	✓
BSI Incinerator	-	-	-	✓
BSI Strategy & Governance	-	-	-	✓
Biosecurity Internal Control.	-	-	-	✓
BSI Committees Meetings	-	-	-	✓
Biosecurity Legislation Review	-	-	-	✓
Biosecurity Market Access Strategy	-	-	-	✓
Animal Health Technical Support.	-	-	-	✓
e-Phyto training	-	-	-	✓
Quarantine Regulators Meeting Vietnam	-	-	-	✓
Joint-surveillance work between BSI and PNG NAQIA	-	-	-	✓
Pacific Export Operational Pathway Training	-	-	-	✓
Early Warning System	-	-	-	✓
Participation of Solomon Islands in Joint Visits by National Border Agencies	-	-	-	✓

2021-22:

- Airport refurbishment – advice on X-ray unit and biosecurity layout
- Pacific Games organising committee
- Engaging a short-term DAFF advisor to prepare a plan for the Pacific Games
- Succession planning
- Developing a National Priority Pest List and National Priority Animal List
- Review of Emergency Response Plan
- Needs analysis for a Post Entry Quarantine facility for dogs and cats in Honiara
- Consumables to support disease surveillance training – with PHAMA Plus
- Internal biosecurity training induction and refresher training of existing BSI staff. Training included:

- Biosecurity Training Program – Comprehensive draft program developed covering induction, HR, plant/animal health, trade, admin and technical skills. To be reviewed and workshopped with BSI by December 2022.
- Refresher Trainings (June–July 2022) – Conducted for Honiara staff on BSI basics, legislation, operations, awareness, stakeholder engagement, and compliance. Reported to improve knowledge, productivity, and morale. Mentoring still required.
- Provincial Trainings (Oct 2022) – Induction, legislation and vessel clearance training scheduled for provincial staff unable to join earlier due to poor connectivity.
- Jurisprudence Training (Oct 2022) – One-day training with DPP to build investigation, case file preparation, and prosecution skills under the Biosecurity Act. Practical case study prepared by SIBDP.
- Work Procedure Training – Presentations on clearance processes and risk goods drafted; delivery delayed by DAFF advisor's late deployment, may need to proceed without.
- BSI Essential Forms Register and update (e.g. import permits, container standards, cleanliness checks).
- BSI Public awareness: Supporting BSI Comms Unit to refresh its strategy, build website/skills, and prepare awareness campaigns ahead of Pacific Games 2023.
- Monthly meetings and field visits to all BSI sites in Honiara built trust; linkages established with PHAMA Plus, POETCom (Pacific Organic & Ethical Trade Community), and industry groups for training and market access.
- Reviewing outdated 2012 fee schedule for Cabinet gazetting; intended to strengthen revenue and support BSI's shift towards SOE status.
- Reviewing MAL Extension Officers to fill provincial staffing gaps at entry points; list to go to Attorney General, then Cabinet for gazetting.
- SIBDP facilitating talks between BSI and Solomon Islands Customs and Excise Division to close system gaps, secure ASYCUDA access, and improve joint operations.
- SIBDP coordinating training with MAL Human Resources and Public Service Institute to improve BSI Operations' data handling and reporting.
- Identifying equipment needs with BSI Operations/Market Access, liaising with Solomon Islands Ports Association on compliance with BSI Act (holding area, incinerator, inspections).
- Supporting BSI Surveillance to run pest surveys (Guadalcanal June 2022; high-risk pest survey later in 2022) with NAQS and DAFF Pacific.
- Work safety equipment - Providing ergonomic setups for SIBDP staff, with risk assessment and emergency planning in progress.
- Engaged with Australian border authorities on rejected betel nut and mustard consignments.
- Draft National Priority Pest and Animal Disease Lists prepared with BSI/MAL Livestock
- Supporting the gazetting of MAL Extension Officers

2022-23

- Deployment of DAFF advisor to support BSI's planning for the Pacific Games
- Airport X-ray installation
- A plant pest and disease survey was conducted in Guadalcanal (July 2022)
- Market Access Assistance (export and internal biosecurity regulations)

- National Priority Pest and Animal Disease Lists finalised in October 2022. A revised Biosecurity Emergency Response Plan was also completed and validated with BSI and MAL.
- Revised fee schedule (benchmarked against Fiji and Vanuatu)
- Compliance activities at Noro Port
- Training
 - Training Module drafted and validated
 - Refresher Training – Conducted in Honiara (June–July 2022), covering BSI operations, legislation, stakeholder engagement, and compliance. Feedback positive.
 - Provincial Trainings – Delivered in October 2022 after connectivity issues prevented virtual participation.
 - Investigations & Prosecutions – Introductory training run with the DPP in Nov 2022; more sessions planned for 2023.
 - Work Procedure Training – Pending DAFF advisor arrival, though deployment is delayed.
- Strengthening BSI function and governance
- Work to gazette MAL extension officers
- Communications, publicity and promotion (communications campaigns planned and prioritised).
- Active collaborations with Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) (“One Country One Crop”), PHAMA Plus, World Bank (Solomon Islands Agriculture and Rural Transformation project), SPC, PACER Plus, IFIAD (Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development), New Zealand MPI.

2023-24

- DAFF Short Term Advisor in country (Duncan Sneddon) - biosecurity management plan for the Pacific Games
- Pacific Games preparation

2024-25

- Asian Subterranean Termite - Delimitation, identification and data management
- Biosecurity Farm Guidelines
- Gazette of MAL Additional Staff
- BSI Incinerator
- BSI Strategy & Governance
- Biosecurity Internal Control.
- BSI Committees Meetings
- Biosecurity Legislation Review
- Biosecurity Market Access Strategy
- Animal Health Technical Support.
- e-Phyto training
- Quarantine Regulators Meeting Vietnam
- Joint-surveillance work between BSI and the PNG National Agricultural and Quarantine Inspection Agency
- Pacific Export Operational Pathway Training

- Early Warning System
- Participation of Solomon Islands in Joint Visits by National Border Agencies

Appendix F Program communication and governance channels

This material has been provided by DAFF, organised and edited by Sapere for length.

Table 16: Ongoing committees/meetings limited to DAFF and/or DFAT

Committee/meeting	Frequency	Purpose	Status
DAFF and DFAT catch up (EL1 level)	Fortnightly	Updates on PBPP implementation	Continues
DAFF and DFAT catch up (EL2 level)	Quarterly	Updates on PBPP implementation and discuss strategy/direction of biosecurity work in the Pacific	Continues
Vanuatu activity meeting (DAFF internal)	Every 6 weeks	Discuss progress on Vanuatu activities under PBPP	Continues
Sea container activity meeting (DAFF internal)	Every month	Discuss progress on sea container activities under PBPP	Has recently ended with the completion of activity
International Agricultural Biosecurity Technical Working Group (IAB TWG) (DAFF and DFAT)	Weekly updates	Coordinated by PBPP team – not just on PBPP For technical biosecurity cooperation between DFAT and DAFF (and predecessor) as well as assist communication and awareness between relevant areas during COVID-19.	Operated from April 2020 to June 2020.
Assistant Secretary Level Oversight Group (DAFF and DFAT)	Meet on an exception basis	Continuation and development of the technical biosecurity cooperation between DFAT and DAFF (and predecessor) Respond to issues identified by Technical Working group	Completed

Committee/meeting	Frequency	Purpose	Status
Assistant Secretary level steering committee for PBPP	6 monthly	Review progress, discuss issues and approve annual workplans and budgets	Ended May 2022. No longer necessary to meet at high level.
Director level partnership working group for PBPP	Monthly	Review implementation of partnership activities, develop and prepare annual workplans and budgets for approval by the steering committee	Ended in 2023, in Office of the Pacific team transition. Replaced by EL2 and EL1 meetings listed above.

Table 17: Ongoing committee/meetings beyond DAFF and DFAT

Committee/meeting	Frequency	Purpose	Status
Pacific Engagement and Communication Network (DAFF, PHAMA Plus, PACER Plus implementation unit, New Zealand MFAT, New Zealand MPI)	Every 2 months	- Intended to support effective and consistent biosecurity and market access messaging to Pacific region audiences/agencies - Facilitates member organisations to share messaging and resources and to assist in response to an outbreak. - Formal and informal network and relationship building between countries.	Ended in September 2022
MPI and DAFF	Every 3 weeks	Provide updates on Pacific activities, identify/plan opportunities for collaboration.	To improve effectiveness, recently been split into 2 monthly meetings: <i>strategic</i> meeting (to discuss and align new design and higher-level objectives) and <i>ops</i> meeting (to coordinate implementation and collaborate where possible).

About Sapere

Sapere is one of the largest expert consulting firms in Australasia, and a leader in the provision of independent economic, forensic accounting and public policy services. We provide independent expert testimony, strategic advisory services, data analytics and other advice to Australasia's government agencies, regulatory bodies, private sector corporates, and major law firms.

'Sapere' comes from Latin (to be wise) and the phrase 'sapere aude' (dare to be wise). The phrase is associated with German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who promoted the use of reason as a tool of thought; an approach that underpins all Sapere's practice groups.

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