



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry

# Pacific Biosecurity Strategy

## 2022 to 2027





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#### Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.



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# Introduction

This is the first Pacific Biosecurity Strategy developed by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The strategy aims to improve plant, animal (including aquatic animal) and environmental health, and biosecurity outcomes in the region.

Our approach to improving outcomes includes relationship-building, collaboration and support, and co-design and co-delivery with Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) (see [Appendix A](#)), near neighbours and relevant organisations in the region. Our involvement in addressing themes and activities that could be conducted under this strategy ranges from leading to being a partner or a participant.

The strategy will also guide our participation and contribution in the development and implementation of biosecurity strategies of other agencies and organisations in the Pacific region. It will be reviewed, refined and expanded as required.



# 1 Context and purpose

The agricultural sector is crucial for supporting food security and nutrition, as well as sustainable and broad-based economic growth and development. It is vital for the livelihoods of most communities of the Pacific and our near neighbours Indonesia and Timor-Leste.

Plant, animal and environmental health and biosecurity threats can create significant challenges for PICTs and near neighbours through food insecurity and loss of agricultural trade and tourism revenue streams. This can undermine economic growth and stability and affect human health.

Climate change and increasing movement of people and goods in our region and around the world has increased the risk of exotic pests and diseases entering and establishing in our region. While ad-hoc technical and other exchange is already occurring, a well-coordinated, multi-disciplinary approach will support Australia, PICTs and our near neighbours to address increased pest and disease risks. It will also support us to better respond to these threats to sustainable agriculture, food systems, environment, market-access opportunities and economic prosperity.

The implementation of this strategy will contribute to several United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs), including:

- 2 – Zero hunger
- 8 – Decent work and economic growth
- 14 – Life below water
- 15 – Life on land
- 17 – Partnerships for the goals.

By identifying and mitigating biosecurity threats in the Pacific, Australia is supporting and protecting regional plant, animal and environmental health and biosecurity for all stakeholders. Australia is committed to building a stronger and more united Pacific family, supporting increased engagement across our region. We will build on existing relationships and establish new ones with PICTs, near neighbours and like-minded partners to anticipate, prepare for and respond to identified plant, animal and environmental health and biosecurity needs over the life of this strategy.



## 2 Vision

Our vision is stronger biosecurity systems and partnerships across the Pacific and near neighbours, which contribute to sustainable regional economic growth, food systems, food security, biodiversity, environmental protection, market access and social prosperity.

## 3 Scope

This strategy covers our plant, animal and environmental health and biosecurity activities and projects with PICTs, Indonesia and Timor-Leste. It does not address Australia's external territories, which are managed under domestic biosecurity processes.



## 4 Strategic alignment

This strategy addresses [Commonwealth Biosecurity 2030](#) strategic roadmap outcomes and strategic actions, including:

1. Develop a strategy to support our Pacific Island biosecurity partnerships and engage 2 dedicated engagement officers
2. Increase partnership activities with our near neighbours to build their risk-management capability and continue our engagement with international bodies
3. Expand offshore assurance arrangements and overseas supply-chain integration
4. Increase offshore intelligence, research and data sourcing to support risk-based interventions, preparedness and response.

Our focus on partnership activities with PICTs and near neighbours is consistent with Australia's commitment to collaborate in building a stronger and more united Pacific family, supporting the economic prosperity and food security of PICTs and near neighbours.

Primarily intended for the department, we have developed this strategy in consultation with other agencies to guide our Pacific biosecurity activities. We will collaborate with those agencies in implementing the strategy. This strategy will also fit alongside other biosecurity strategies being developed through other governments of the region (e.g. New Zealand) as well as under a planned regional biosecurity strategy developed through the Pacific Community (SPC).

An overarching component of each of the strategic themes in this strategy is our enhanced commitment to continued provision of support and leadership on plant, animal and environmental health and biosecurity issues in the region.



## Strategic themes

These strategic themes will guide our decisions about activities we initiate, advocate or support. These activities could include department-led projects or activities conducted in collaboration with stakeholders, including Australian Government and state and territory agencies, non-government organisations, and government agencies and other organisations within the Pacific.

### Enhance biosecurity partnerships between Australia, PICTs and near neighbours in a multifaceted and holistic way to maintain existing and forge new mutually beneficial regional relationships

We will:

- Actively engage with our counterparts within PICTs and near neighbours to develop or improve government-to-government relationships.
- Support PICT and near neighbour government agencies engage and bridge capacity across agencies within their own countries to improve plant, animal and environmental health and biosecurity outcomes.
- Facilitate, promote and invest in relationships between Australian agencies and organisations, government agencies and non-government organisations within the region – for example, the SPC, CSIRO, Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Pacific Horticulture and Agricultural Market Access Plus program ([PHAMA Plus](#)) and Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus ([PACER Plus](#)), other research and development corporations, state and territory governments and universities.

### Enhance PICTs' and near neighbours' participation to bring a regional voice to international multilateral biosecurity forums

We will:

- Facilitate and actively support PICTs and near neighbours to
  - engage with international plant and animal health organisations, including the World Organisation for Animal Health, International Plant Protection Convention and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
  - participate in various regional multilateral forums of international plant and animal health organisations, including the Pacific Plant Protection Organisation, Pacific Heads of Veterinary and Animal Production Services Committee, the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
  - associate with international environmental organisations and treaties, including the Convention on Biological Diversity
- Actively support regional activities to develop and implement standards and other specific materials to address regional plant, animal and environmental health and biosecurity issues
  - this may include providing targeted human and other resources or using our international networks, forums and relationships to support regional priorities.

## Collaboratively develop and enhance biosecurity capacity and capability of PICTs and near neighbours

We will:

- Engage with PICTs and near neighbours, other agencies and organisations to identify, prioritise and address needs appropriately and efficiently
  - including matters of risk assessment, inspection, application of measures, surveillance, diagnostics, preparedness, response and other capabilities that support sustainable production, food security, biosecurity operations and market access
  - bilaterally, multilaterally and in partnership with other support and delivery organisations, including the Pacific Biosecurity Partnerships Program, SPC, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Market Development Facility, Pacific Trade Invest and the FAO.

## Enhance safe trade and market access opportunities of PICTs and near neighbours

We will:

- Work collaboratively with PICTs, near neighbours and other organisations to identify and enhance opportunities for sustainable market access (within the region and beyond). This includes the
  - utilisation of existing market access achieved through past programs of work including through PHAMA and PHAMA Plus
  - implementation of PHAMA Plus and PACER Plus programs
  - application of sanitary and phytosanitary rules and relevant underpinning standards.



## 5 Approach

Numerous organisations are already working with PICTs and near neighbours to expand plant, animal and environmental health and biosecurity capacity. These include government and non-government bodies from Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America, the European Union, the United Kingdom and Asia. The involvement of large numbers of different groups can make coordination complex.

This strategy will guide how we align, coordinate and add value to plant, animal and environmental health and biosecurity activities as a department, across Australian Government agencies and with other organisations working in the Pacific.

## 6 Enablers

The department and Australian Government more broadly are committed to engagement, collaboration and cooperation in our region. To date, PICTs and near neighbours have expressed frustration at the difficulty in navigating our internal structures and processes to obtain information or find the best contact to progress their issues. People and partnerships, governance and resourcing will be crucial to the implementation of this strategy. These enablers will facilitate more effective communication between PICTs, near neighbours and the department and help to solve problems, address issues, improve partnerships and collaborations and increase our ability to improve biosecurity outcomes for the Pacific.

### People and partnerships

People-to-people links are the foundation of this strategy. Over many years, we have built broad and deep relationships within our region. Implementation of this strategy will support and reinforce these links directly with PICTs and near neighbours, within the department and other agencies, and with like-minded strategic partners, government and non-government organisations, academia and the private sector. This strategy supports establishment and continuation of opportunities to work with additional partners and stakeholders to improve plant, animal and environmental health and biosecurity outcomes across the region.

Enhanced collaboration with New Zealand government and non-government agencies will be critical to coordinate and deliver support and improve outcomes for the region.

Continued coordination with and through SPC will also be critical in ensuring efficient biosecurity and health-related project development and delivery, given their extensive projects and networks in the region.

### Governance

This strategy will be governed by the Biosecurity and Compliance Group, overseen by the Deputy Secretary. The focal points for engagement and implementation of this strategy will be the Office of the Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer, the Office of the Australian Chief Veterinary Officer and the Office of the Australian Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer. Specific activities will be implemented through relevant areas of the department, consistent with this strategy. We will report on progress internally through the Biosecurity and Compliance Board and periodically provide external communications to ensure stakeholders are aware, informed and acknowledged for their support in the implementation of this strategy. We anticipate that individual initiatives will include project governance practices representative of initiative collaborators, including project steering groups or other oversight forums.

### Resourcing

We will explore opportunities to support the implementation of this strategy by leveraging, supplementing and sustaining existing investments. Future activities may be conducted as normal business, through departmental funding or as projects. Activities may be able to make use of short-term or ongoing funding streams if relevant to the scope of those programs. Alternatively, specific proposals for additional Australian Government funding may be made. We will collaborate with other agencies as part of this process. Given the unpredictable nature (timing, location and size) of biosecurity crises, resourcing and prioritisation of activities will also need to be adaptive and responsive.

# Appendix A: Pacific Island Countries and Territories

- American Samoa
- Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
- Cook Islands
- Federated States of Micronesia
- Fiji
- French Polynesia
- Guam
- Kiribati
- Nauru
- New Caledonia
- Niue
- Palau
- Papua New Guinea
- Pitcairn Island
- Republic of the Marshall Islands
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- Vanuatu
- Wallis and Futuna



