Ex- Post Evaluation of STDF/PG/133

Capacity Building in the Use of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Tool in the Pacific

Final Report

Submitted to STDF Secretariat by William Roberts

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A significant impediment to trade between countries is concerns that importation of plants and plant products will result in the establishment of new damaging pests [1] in the importing country. The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) has developed a range of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) that support safe trade in plants and plant products. Implementing these standards and meeting importing country phytosanitary requirements requires significant human, technical and legal resources.

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) has produced the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) tool. This is a structured computer based questionnaire that gathers detailed information on a country's technical, legal and human capacity to undertake phytosanitary procedures to the standard set out in the ISPMs. The PCE is undertaken through a workshop that is facilitated by a trained PCE practitioner. The output of the PCE is a highly detailed assessment that allows countries, aid organizations and other relevant stakeholders to identify areas that need improved capacity.

This project focused on the countries that are members of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). A number of dependent territories in the region participated in some activities at their own costs. The project commenced in August 2007 and finished in December 2009. The total cost of the project was $170,653 with the STDF contributing $125,300 and the balance from the SPC and the IPPC.

The project was well executed with all the outputs specified in the Grant Proposal being achieved. Outputs included:

- People from 14 countries were trained in the use of the PCE tool and introduced to concepts in international trade in plants and plant products,
- PCE evaluation workshops were held in 14 countries with over 150 people involved in PCE training and workshops
- Detailed PCE results were compiled for 14 countries
- A number of phytosanitary evaluation reports were produced and circulated to participating countries

This evaluation found evidence that this project is contributing to the higher level objectives of the STDF. The results of the PCE work are being used by countries and aid organizations to target projects to improve phytosanitary capacity and there are improvements in the capacity to export plant products from some countries in the region. However, across the region, phytosanitary capacity and the ability to meet international standards and market requirements is still quite limited. A number of recommendations relevant to the development of future phytosanitary capacity building in this region are provided in this report. These relate to access to, and awareness of, the PCE results, the need to increase the sustainability of improvements in capacity and the possibility of using projects based on the whole production and export chain of specific products to better target phytosanitary capacity building.

[1] Pests are defined by the IPPC as: Any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Many importing countries have a very low or sometimes zero tolerance for the presence of significant plant pests in imported plant products. Therefore the presence or suspected presence of plant pests is often a very real and significant impediment to the export of plant products.

The Commission on Phytosanitary Measures , the governing body of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), has developed a series of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) that provide guidance on managing pests, applying phytosanitary measures, inspecting products for compliance and certifying products meet requirements. However, the ability to achieve these ISPMs requires that exporting countries establish a National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) that has sufficient infrastructure, staff, record keeping systems and training to deliver the obligations and requirements of the IPPC. Industry also needs to play a significant role in producing plants and plant products that can be certified by the NPPO as meeting the phytosanitary standards required.

One of the problems countries face when trying to improve their phytosanitary capacity is knowing what they have and what they need. The IPPC has developed the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) tool which allows countries to undertake a structured process that assesses their phytosanitary capacity and identifies the important deficiencies that need to be addressed. The PCE generates a snapshot of a country's phytosanitary capacity at a particular time, and provides a framework for informed strategic planning. The PCE allows for the prioritization of activities/resources to fill capacity gaps and enhance the effectiveness of the overall phytosanitary system. Strategic plans developed through the PCE also provide the basis for dialogue with donors of development aid and thus improve the likelihood of access to further funding.

The PCE is a computer based semi structured questionnaire with modules that address all the legal, technical and resource factors that are required for a fully functioning phytosanitary system that supports safe trade and provides plant protection for agriculture and natural ecosystems. Application of the PCE is through workshops that bring together relevant stakeholders who develop a consensus set of answers to the PCE questions. PCE results are intended to be used by NPPOs, and more broadly by government agencies, as a basis to identify capacity building or infrastructure needs and actions to address them. These are not publicly released unless a country wishes to use or present their PCE results externally. The PCE provides a report on the status of a country at a particular time and the IPPC recommends that a complete PCE be applied every 3-4 years to allow a country to track progress in improving their phytosanitary capacity and update their planning.

1.2 Summary of project

The principal objective of the project was to evaluate the capacity of countries in the Pacific Region to implement phytosanitary requirements, facilitate trade and better deliver official and commercial phytosanitary services to their clients and meet international obligations. The PCE tool was to be used as the main evaluation method.

The focus of this project was the 22 island countries and territories that are members of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). The National Plant Protection Organizations of the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu were identified as the primary collaborating Government Agencies. These 14 countries were the major focus of the STDF funding and for convenience these are referred to as the core countries throughout this report.

The plant protection organisations of the dependent territories of American Samoa (USA), Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (USA), Guam (USA), French Polynesia (France), New Caledonia (France), Pitcairn Islands (UK), Tokelau (NZ) and Wallis and Futuna (France) as members of the SPC, were invited to participate in this project at their cost or at the cost of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

The principal objective of the project was to evaluate the capacity of countries in the Pacific Region to implement phytosanitary requirements, facilitate trade and better deliver official and commercial phytosanitary services to their clients and meet international obligations. This was undertaken by:

Specific objective 1: Conducting a regional training workshop on the PCE tool; and

Specific objective 2: Apply the PCE tool in 6 selected countries in the region.

The proposed outputs and the activities associated with these objectives as specified in the final project documentation are attached in Annex 1.

In reporting against the objectives of the project the Project Termination Report identified the following four project outputs:

Output 1: Training for 39 potential practitioners on the PCE tool in 21 territories of the Pacific Island Community.

Output 2: Introduction of the concepts of international trade in plants and plant products, the SPS Agreement and international standard setting process and facilitate networking of biosecurity personnel in the region.

Output 3: Direct application of the PCE tool in 14 countries.

Output 4: Elaboration of six evaluation reports (for six selected countries) summarizing the main results and lessons learned to be distributed to other participating countries and published on the SPC website.

1.3 Objective of the evaluation and structure of this report

This report follows the standard objectives that form the basis of STDF project evaluation:

- **Verification of whether the project achieved the objectives set out in the project document.** This takes into account:
    - relevance,
    - effectiveness,
    - efficiency,
    - impact, and
    - sustainability.

- **Identification of whether the project has achieved any of the high level objectives of the Facility.** This considers the contribution the project has made to improve market access through phytosanitary capacity building in the region.
- **Identification of the key lessons learned for the benefit of both recipients and donors and for future STDF programme development.** This draws upon the project documentation, the results of the questionnaire and discussions with officials in the region.

This evaluation took into account the principal objective, the specific objectives and the project outputs. The terms of reference for the evaluation are provided in Annex 2.

1.4 The evaluator

Dr William Roberts has an extensive background at dealing with the phytosanitary issues for more than 20 years at a country and international level. He was Australia's Chief Plant Protection Officer and Principal Scientist in Biosecurity Australia and represented the Australia at the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures, the Treaty on Genetic Resources and negotiations on some technical aspects of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety of the Convention on Biological Diversity. He has also worked at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as the Coordinator for the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). He has provided training on the IPPC in a number of SPS training workshops. He retired from the Australian Government in 2010 and is currently working part time as Principal Scientist with the Plant Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre. He has no contractual or financial links related to the project, the project leaders or participants or the countries involved in the project. He is not aware of any real or potential conflicts of interest.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 General approach

This evaluation is based upon a review of relevant documents, the use of a questionnaire that seeks feedback on performance of the specific project activities and the overall benefits of the project and interviews by Skype, phone and by email of key staff and other stakeholders involved in the project or working with the countries in the region.

2.2 Documents

The WTO provided a CD with all the project documents held in their office. Several relevant documents were downloaded from the IPPC website and Mr Orlando Sosa, from the IPPC Secretariat, provided some internal reports and other documents.

2.3 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was drafted in consultation with the STDF Secretariat and Mr Orlando Sosa from the IPPC (Annex 3). This questionnaire covered: relevance of the project, quality of the workshops, further use of the skills and knowledge gained and whether the project made a difference. Feedback was also sought on potential future activities that would improve phytosanitary capacity and support export trade.

The questionnaire was sent to the IPPC contact points of core countries participating in the project, with a request that it be distributed to all those involved in the PCE workshops. The list of participants in each territory obtained from the Final Termination Report was provided to the IPPC contact points to assist with this distribution.

3. MAIN FINDINGS

3.1 Questionnaire results

According to the Final Termination Report over 150 people were involved in the PCE workshops. However, despite several reminders to the contact points returns of the questionnaire were quite low. Some countries did not respond at all, while other countries provided only one response intended to represent the views of all involved from that country. Only one country, (identified as Country A in this report), provided a substantial number of returns with almost 50% of people involved in the project responding. Although the low rate of returns makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions based on a statistically valid sample it does provide an indirect indicator of the investment of resources and/or the priority given to phytosanitary issues in some countries in the region. This point is discussed in more detail later in the report.

The questionnaire results are summarized in Annex 4. The results from Country A are presented separately as the number of returns provided an opportunity to look at differing views within one country. All of the returns from the other countries have been grouped together.

3.2 Relevance

Question 1 directly addressed the relevance of an ability to assess phytosanitary capacity to the performance of the responders job. Evaluation of phytosanitary capacity was clearly highly relevant to those involved with the project from country A. However, 3 out of 7 of the grouped countries found evaluation only slightly or not relevant to their job. This may suggest that a significant number of people in the evaluation sessions may not have had a primary focus of the development and/or delivery of phytosanitary services. However, this does not necessarily indicate a problem - many people relevant to the project activities will not be primarily focussed on phytosanitary issues. For example, it would be appropriate for a lawyer involved in developing phytosanitary legislation to be involved in the project activities even if they were not directly involved in delivery phytosanitary services. One of the strengths of the PCE tool is that it helps brings together relevant people with diverse responsibilities.

The answers to Questions 2 indicate that around 50% of respondents had at best an average understanding of their countries capacity to meet SPS requirements. In addition all responders indicated that there was no or only a basic system in place to evaluate phytosanitary capacity.

Taken overall, these results indicate that there is a need to be able to evaluate phytosanitary capacity and that at best there is only a basic capacity in the project countries to undertake this evaluation. The conclusion is that the project objectives were very relevant.

3.3 Effectiveness

3.3.1 Output 1: Training for 39 potential practitioners on the PCE tool in 21 territories of the Pacific Island Community

At the start of the project a regional workshop was held in Tonga in October 2007. The aim of this workshop was to provide initial training in the use of the PCE tool to as many country representatives as possible. The training workshop was attended by a total of 29 representatives from 16 of the 22 territories proposed in the Grant Application (Table 1). This included 13 of the 14 core countries, 3 countries not funded by the project, and staff from the SPC. Palau was the only core country that was not represented at the training workshop in Tonga. However, a PCE evaluation workshop was held in Palau and training in the use of the PCE tool formed part of this workshop (see later section).

Questions 4 and 5 address the design and delivery of the training activities. Results for these questions were largely consistent between Country A and the grouped countries. The level of delivery was considered appropriate and the technical resources provided for the workshops were considered sufficient. All respondents considered that the workshops provided some or good skills and knowledge to allow people to assess their country's phytosanitary capacity.

There were clearly concerns about lack of training and practice time with a majority of responses indicating that it was not sufficient. This issue was also reflected in specific comments received that highlighting the lack of time to find and verify the detailed information needed to complete the PCE tool. The PCE tool is intended to provide a comprehensive assessment of phytosanitary and SPS capacity and therefore it does have very significant data requirements.

When the training associated with the country PCE evaluation workshops are taken into account over 150 people were involved in PCE workshops, well exceeding the 39 potential practitioners specified. Table 1, based on the available documentation, shows that PCE training was only provided to 17 of the 21 countries/territories proposed. However, all core countries were involved in the training workshops. Given the difficulties in coordinating workshop times and travel across the region and finding funding for the non-core participants this is a good outcome. It is concluded that this Output is substantially achieved.

Table 1: Summary of country involvement in PCE training and evaluation

Country/ territory	Primary focus of project?	Participated in Tonga training workshop?	In country PCE evaluation workshop?
Cook Islands	Yes	Yes (2)*	Yes
Federated States of Micronesia	Yes	Yes (1)	Yes
Fiji	Yes	Yes (3)	Yes
Kiribati	Yes	Yes (2)	Yes
Marshall Islands	Yes	Yes (2)	Yes
Nauru	Yes	Yes (2)	Yes
Niue	Yes	Yes (2)	Yes
Palau	Yes	No	Yes
Papua New Guinea	Yes	Yes (2)	Yes
Samoa	Yes	Yes (2)	Yes
Solomon Islands	Yes	Yes (2)	Yes
Tonga	Yes	Yes (1)	Yes
Tuvalu	Yes	Yes (2)	Yes
Vanuatu	Yes	Yes (2)	Yes
American Samoa (USA)	No	No	No
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (USA)	No	No	No
Guam (USA)	No	No	No
French Polynesia (France)	No	Yes (1)	No
New Caledonia (France)	No	Yes	No
Pitcairn Islands (UK)	No	No	No
Tokelau (NZ)	No	No	No
Wallis and Futuna (France)	No	Yes (1)	No

* Number of participants attending shown in brackets

3.3.2 Output 2: Introduction of the concepts of international trade in plants and plant products, the SPS Agreement and international standard setting process and facilitate networking of biosecurity personnel in the region

The main training workshop in Tonga (October 2007) was attended by Mr Richard Ivess, IPPC Coordinator who introduced the concepts of international trade, the SPS agreement and the IPPC. In addition the PCE tool comprehensively addresses country capacity to provide plant biosecurity services and support phytosanitary aspects of international trade. Therefore the activities associated with applying the PCE tool promote consideration of the concepts of international trade in plants and plant products, the SPS agreement and the IPPC as the international body setting standards body.

The project delivered many opportunities for networking across the region with the SPC playing a key coordination role and focus for the activity by facilitating workshops and compiling results of evaluations. The project also provided opportunities for the involvement of other countries in the

region that were not the primary focus of the project. The significant involvement of officers from the IPPC in workshops also provided opportunities for IPPC staff to become more familiar with the regions phytosanitary issues and for people in the region to become more familiar with IPPC activities. It is concluded that this Output was fully achieved.

3.3.3 Output 3: Direct application of the PCE tool in 14 countries

Table 2 provides the dates of the PCE workshops and the number attending. Over 150 people were involved in these workshops representing the majority of people involved in phytosanitary issues or related areas in the core countries. These workshops generally ran for 5 days and were supported by a facilitator either from the SPC or the IPPC. The focus of the workshops was on completion of all modules of the PCE tool with information specific to the country. Most PCE modules were completed during the workshops with the remainder completed by the territory supplying relevant information after the workshop.

In most countries, quite large numbers of people attended the evaluation workshops. This reflects that fact that the PCE tool gathers comprehensive information on all aspects of plant protection and phytosanitary capacity such as legal frameworks, technical facilities, technical training, organizational structure and industry capacity. Therefore inputs from a wide range people are needed. A significant side benefit of these workshops was opportunity provided for networking between people who have an involvement in phytosanitary issues and trade in plants and plant products.

It is concluded that this Output was fully achieved with the PCE tool evaluation workshops being run in all 14 core countries

Table 2: PCE Evaluation Workshops (data extracted from Annex 4 of the Project Termination Report)

Territory	**Date held**	**Number attending**
Kiribati	15-22 July 2008	11
Tonga	26-30 October 2009	11
Fiji	22-28 March 2008	17
Solomon Islands	28 April – 2 May 2008	20
Cook Islands	1-3 April 2008	17
Tuvalu	2-3 June 2008	3
Vanuatu	June 2009	20
Nauru	September 2009	9
Niue	November 2008	3
Papua New Guinea	26-30 May 2008	7
Palau	11-14 February 2008	11
Samoa	7-10 July 2008	13
Marshall Islands	23-27 November 2009	10
Federated States of Micronesia	September 2009	4
	Total	**156**

3.3.4 Output 4: Elaboration of six evaluation reports (for six selected countries) summarizing the main results and lessons learned to be distributed to other participating countries and published on the SPC website

The SPC coordinated the development of an Excel spreadsheet providing a comparative analysis of the PCE results. The project leader provided a copy of this report to the consultant who can confirm that the SPC compiled the PCE analysis for 13 of the 14 core territory involved in this project. It is not clear why Palau is not included in this compilation. However, Palau did have a PCE evaluation workshop (February 2008) and therefore it can be concluded that a PCE analysis was undertaken for all 14 of the core countries and an evaluation report compiled.

A workshop was held in Fiji in November 2009 which brought together officials from 6 countries in the South West Pacific (Fiji, Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Samoa), as well as the SPC and IPPC to review plant biosecurity. This meeting focused on a short survey of these countries that asked questions about biosecurity of trade, impediments to trade and decision making structures relevant to biosecurity risk management. Presumably the answers to this survey were based on the results of the PCE evaluation. The results of this survey are presented in Annex 5 of the Project Termination Report publicly available on the SDTF and the IPPC websites. Although this report was not found on the SPC website it is readily available through the other websites to all countries in the region.

In summary, the 14 PCE evaluation reports and the report available in the Project Termination Report available on the websites provides evidence that this Output was achieved.

3.4 Efficiency

The budget for the project was US$236,430 consisting of US$179,000 contribution from the STDF and US$57,430 as in-kind contribution from SPC and the IPPC. The significant leverage of the STDF funding represented by the in-kind contributions to the project illustrates the commitment by the SPC and the IPPC to ensure that the project was comprehensively completed.

The schedule of project activities presented in the Project Termination Report shows that some of the activities were delivered up to 12 months after the projected target date. Variations in scheduling of specific activities would be expected in a project of this size and complexity. Significantly there was only a 6 month delay in completing the entire project so scheduling changes during the course of the project did not lead to a major delay in completion.

This was a complex project involving a significant number of people involved and facing the high costs of travel within the Pacific Region. The total cost of the project and the timeliness of delivery of project activities represents an excellent performance and is an efficient use of STDF funding.

3.5 Impact

3.5.1 Use of the PCE

Questions 7, 8, 9 of the questionnaire examined use of the PCE after the training activities were completed. Question 7 indicates that around 50% of respondents have used the PCE tool since the training activities. Given the large number of people involved in the training and the likelihood that

many of these people did not have primary responsibilities for delivering phytosanitary services this is a reasonable result.

Question 8 asks if the PCE tool has been used to evaluate the respondent countries phytosanitary capacity. Only around 50% answered that the PCE had been used for a country evaluation despite the fact that a PCE had been prepared for all 14 core countries involved in this activity (see section on Output 4 above). It seems that there is a significant lack of awareness of the PCE work undertaken in this project. This issue is discussed further below.

3.5.2 Changes made as a result of the PCE

Question 10 seeks information about any changes made as a result of the PCE. Answers were fairly evenly split between no changes and changes both for Country A and the grouped countries. The "no" answers in Country A responses may reflect lack of detailed familiarity with phytosanitary activities but the higher number of "yes" answers suggests that Country A has acted on the findings of the evaluation.

Both the grouped countries and Country A responses identified both a lack of resources and insufficient technical capacity as the major impediments to making improvements in phytosanitary capacity. Additional comments received on impediments included: the difficulties in sharing technical resources and information between research organizations and government authorities; difficulties with legislation and national polices and the lack of support from national decision makers.

The responses indicate that access to overseas markets has improved in only 4 of the 7 countries responding. For those indicating that access had not improved, the scores indicate that non-SPS issues are slightly more significant than difficulties in meeting phytosanitary requirements. A similar pattern occurs where access had improved. Responses indicated that non-SPS improvements were slightly more significant than improvements in the ability to meet phytosanitary requirements in improving market access. These results emphasize the complexity of the export chain and the need to have a good production system that is supported by a good phytosanitary system. All of these elements need to be in place to support trade.

However, the very low rate of returns combined with the responses suggests that many countries in the region place a low priority on phytosanitary issues and/or have very few resources allocated to this area. Informal feedback from officials familiar with the region confirm this view, as does the personal experience of the consultant working in the IPPC. However, the much more positive attitude of Country A as evidenced by the good rate of questionnaire returns and the specific answers given, indicates that this is not the case for all countries in the region. Progress can be made when sufficient resources are made available.

3.6 Sustainability

The results of the questionnaire and informal comments from people familiar with the Pacific region indicated that there are significant difficulties in maintaining continuity of staff in key positions. A symptom of this was the difficulty of eliciting returns from participants in the PCE project and the returns that indicated a lack of awareness of or lack of use of the PCE results. This was also a major issue highlighted by officials involved in aid programs in the region.

Staff continuity seems to be a problem both within the SPC and within some countries. The underlying issue appears to be a lack of commitment to long term funding for key positions with many staff working on a project to project basis based on short term or limited funding. Many of the critical phytosanitary issues require a sustained long term effort that includes working with industry to provide a reliable supply of product, negotiating access with overseas countries and developing appropriate technical and legal infrastructure to support exports. This work cannot be done on a short term project basis but needs input from experienced staff over a number of years to build phytosanitary infrastructure that is sustained into the future and does not just finish at the end of a funded project. It was suggested by one official involved in aid projects that a minimum of five years is needed to make a real difference which is likely to be sustained.

The questionnaire requested specific suggestions as the future activities that would improve phytosanitary capacity. Not many suggestions were received, again suggesting a lack of awareness and/or perhaps the low priority given to these issues. Most of the suggestions provided were non-specific and called for further training and capacity building activities.

In summary, the apparent lack of awareness of the PCE results, the relatively low number of respondents indicating that they had used the PCE tool since the completion of the training and the staff continuity problems evident in the region does not provide confidence that the PCE tool will be used to guide improvements in phytosanitary capacity into the future.

4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

4.1 Verify whether the project achieved the objectives set out in the project document

Based on this analysis it is concluded that all of the specific outputs of this project were produced to a high standard that sometimes exceeded the standard specified in the Grant Application. These outputs included: training in the PCE tool, introduction of the concepts on international trade in plants and plant products, the SPS and international standard setting, direct application of the PCE tool and elaboration of evaluation reports. In summary the project was highly successful in delivering training and a PCE evaluation to the majority of the countries in the region. The investment from the STDF, when combined with the additional support from the SPC and the IPPC, allowed for a PCE analysis involving over 150 people in 14 countries.

The project has achieved its principal objective to evaluate the capacity of countries in the Pacific Region to implement phytosanitary requirements, facilitate trade and better deliver official and commercial phytosanitary services to their clients and meet international obligations

4.2 Has the project achieved any of the higher level objectives of the Facility such as a measurable impact on market access, an improved domestic SPS situation?

The PCE is intended to provide detailed information that can be used to target capacity building activities rather than directly improving phytosanitary capacity. However, if the PCE is achieving its broader objective then action taken based on the results of the PCE should result in improvements in market access and/or the domestic SPS situation in the countries involved.

Several lines of evidence suggest that some progress is being made. Firstly, there are the results of the questionnaire that show, at least for some countries capacity, has been improved. Secondly, the results of the PCE tool have been used in the design and implementation of a number of capacity building programs and are continuing to be used for projects being developed for future implementation. Thirdly, informal comments from government officials in countries importing products from the Pacific Region suggest that the quality of imports has improved and the rejections due to quarantine pests has declined suggesting that at least in some countries significant improvement in the capacity to support market access has occurred since the end of the project. However, it is clear that improvements are not occurring in every country in the region and there is still much work than can be done.

4.3 Identification of the key lessons learned for the benefit of both recipients and donors and for future STDF programme development

It is clear from this evaluation that gaps in phytosanitary capacity identified by the PCE evaluation are not being addressed in all countries - the Pacific Region still needs much more investment in phytosanitary capacity to support significant trade in plants and plant products. The following recommendations are based on the key lessons learned from this evaluation:

4.3.1 Access to PCE results

The purpose of the PCE tool is to facilitate a detailed analysis of the phytosanitary capacity of a country. The detailed PCE results provide an excellent basis to target future aid and capacity building projects. Discussions with officials involved in aid in the region indicated that the PCE results from this project had been used for this purpose. For example, in the design of the PHARMA project funded by AusAid, the Termination Report states that the consultants involved in developing this project were shown the preliminary PCE results. However, one comment received from an aid official was that the PCE results were not easily available making it difficult to target activities to address the greatest need. However, the information in the PCE is sensitive and it is understandable that a country would wish to have some control on access to this information, but there is no point undertaking a PCE analysis if it is not used. The PCE results should be readily accessible to those with a legitimate need to access them.

Recommendation 1: That for all projects that undertake a PCE analysis, agreement on the use of the results and the agency that will control access to the results, is agreed before the project commences.

4.3.2 Repeat application of the PCE tool in the Pacific

The PCE tool provides an evaluation of phytosanitary capacity at one particular point in time. The intention of the program is that progress should be measured by repeating the PCE analysis after 3-4 years. One of the benefits of the PCE is raising awareness of issues that need to be addressed. If a vigorous program of improvements is implemented then there should be a continuing awareness of the capacity shortfalls that need to be addressed without the need for a formal analysis. Conversely, if a PCE s is not acted upon then there is little point repeating the analysis in 3-4 years as the results will essentially be the same.

PCE evaluations were completed by the end of 2009 and although some changes have been made progress so far has been slow. It is unlikely that another complete evaluation by 2014

would provide useful additional information. However, given the difficulties in the region of making progress and the apparent lack of awareness of the results of the PCE in some countries, it may be useful to undertake a simpler analysis such as that the one carried out in the regional workshop held in Fiji in November 2009 for six countries as reported in Annex 5 of the Final Termination Report. This analysis was based on a simple questionnaire that concentrated on the issues that directly relate to meeting the market phytosanitary requirements. Repeating this as soon as possible with a group of countries that are struggling to make progress would help to raise awareness of, and focus attention on, critical issues that need to be addressed first. This analysis would not require a lot of resources and could be coordinated by the SPC in association with a suitable regional meeting. This would increase the focus on phytosanitary capacity and improve the sustainability of the project outputs.

Recommendation 2: An analysis based on the questionnaire used in Annex 5 of the FTR be undertaken as soon as possible to refresh awareness of, and focus on, the critical phytosanitary issues that are impacting on the ability to export plant products.

4.3.3 Focus of future work

Successful export of plant products where phytosanitary issues are significant requires that a complex chain of events needs to occur. For example, a product needs to be produced to a standard that an importer requires, the phytosanitary status of the product needs to be verified and certified using a phytosanitary certificate and appropriate transport infrastructure needs to be in place to transport the product to the importer. This involves producers, exporters, government officials and technical staff. All of these links need to be completed to the required standard for successful export.

A common strategy when developing phytosanitary capacity building projects is to focus on building general capacity in the expectation that these improvements will contribute to improved exports of a broad range of products. However, an alternative approach would be to focus work on the phytosanitary issues preventing export of specific products. This might involve working with producers on field control of particular crop pests and building specific technical capacity to treat, inspect and certify the product for export. While both approaches have merit the alternative strategy has the potential to return significant economic benefits in a shorter time frame and in many cases the improved capacity will be transferable to other plant products. It may also be easier to attract further funding for capacity building and work on other products if successful export of one product can be demonstrated. The Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Program (PHAMA) in the Pacific is one example of this approach where the focus is on solving the problems in the whole export chain from the producers through to export for individual plant products.

Recommendation 3: In the Pacific Region priority should be given to phytosanitary capacity building projects that focus on the whole production, certification and export chain for individual products in preference to more general capacity building projects.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The evaluator would like to acknowledge the help and assistance provided by people involved in this project from the Pacific and the IPPC. In particular, the evaluator would like to pay tribute to Mr Roy Masamdu from the SPC who died shortly before this evaluation was completed. The messages and tributes from his colleagues demonstrate the high regard he was held in throughout the Pacific Region.

Annex 1. Summary of project activities includes dissemination and monitoring and evaluation activities extracted from the final project documentation.

Output 1	**Conduct regional training workshop on the PCE tool**
Activities	Liaise with partner organisations and collaborating NPPOs regarding resource persons, date and venue for the workshop
	Identify response people for the workshop
	Confirm date and venue
	Workshop published on the IPP, SPC website and in LRD newsletters
	Finalise logistical arrangements for the workshop
	Prepare training and resource materials
	Workshop conducted
	Workshop evaluation conducted
	PCE CD-Rom and relevant resources materials distributed to participants
	Workshop outcome and evaluation responses analysed
	Workshop report completed and submitted to STDF, IPPC Secretariat, SPC and other interested parties
	News article on the workshop and workshop outcomes published in the LRD newsletters
	SPC distributes CD-rom, training and resources materials to PICTs that did not participate in the regional training
Output 2	**Apply the PCE tool in 6 selected countries**
Activities	Select 6 countries to participate in the project
	Resource persons (preferably local expert) identified to facilitate this phase of the project required
	Facilitate the start of the project in the selected countries
	Conduct monitoring visits to the participating countries (one visit per country sourced from project funds, two visits covered by SPC funds)
	Compile outcomes of evaluation exercise and conduct national consultation or meeting discuss the outcomes
	Technical Support/ Supervisory Services by IPPC Secretariat for one week
	Project report written up including suggested mitigation measures to address the gaps
	Distribute outcomes/results of the evaluation to all relevant parties in the selected countries
	External project evaluation undertaken
	Outcomes of this phase of the project published in the LRD newsletters
	Disseminate skills learnt to other PICTs
Output 3	**Project Administration**
Activities	Provide project support in the implementation of this project
	Reports written in a timely manner

Annex 2. Terms of Reference for the ex-post evaluation of STDF/PG/133

Background

In December 2009, STDF project 133 entitled "Capacity building in the use of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Tool in the Pacific" was completed. The objective of the project was to assist National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) of the countries of the Pacific Island Community to evaluate their capacity to implement international phytosanitary requirements, facilitate trade and better deliver official and commercial phytosanitary services to their clients. Support was provided by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the IPPC Secretariat to apply the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) tool.

Project specific outputs were:

- Training for 39 potential practitioners on the PCE tool in 21 territories of the Pacific Island Community.
- Introduction of the concepts of international trade in plants and plant products, the SPS Agreement and international standard setting process and facilitate networking of biosecurity personnel in the region.
- Direct application of the PCE tool in 14 countries.
- Elaboration of six evaluation reports (for six selected countries) summarizing the main results and lessons learned to be distributed to other participating countries and published on the SPC website

Based on these outputs the region would be able to formulate priority actions and the baseline data generated could be used by the development community to assess progress in the phytosanitary area and ensure targeted capacity development in the region.

The STDF Working Group instructed the STDF Secretariat to make the necessary arrangements to conduct an ex-post evaluation of this project. Following consultations, *Mr William Roberts*, was selected as the Consultant for this assignment.

Description of tasks

Under the overall supervision of the STDF Secretariat, and in close collaboration with other stakeholders involved, the consultant shall conduct an independent ex-post evaluation of STDF project 133 in accordance with the STDF Evaluation Guidelines (Appendix 1). In particular, the consultant shall:

- review all available documentation related to the project - to be submitted separately to the consultant by the STDF Secretariat;
- contact relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation of the project to collect other relevant information and documentation as appropriate; in particular the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the IPPC Secretariat.
- develop - in collaboration with the STDF Secretariat - a detailed survey questionnaire for this evaluation based on the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and key lessons learned;

- identify and request stakeholders and beneficiaries to complete and return the survey questionnaire, to get their views about the project and follow-up activities conducted or needed;
- interview by phone/Skype key SPC and IPPC staff involved in the implementation of the project (names to be provided by the STDF Secretariat), to collect relevant information and discuss follow-up actions;
- collect information on how the results and data generated by the project have been used and give recommendations on key elements to be considered to replicate the project in other countries/regions; and
- on the basis of the information collected, draft and submit an evaluation report in English in the proper format (see Appendix 1) to the STDF Secretary no later than Tuesday 31 January 2012 close of business.

Annex 3. Questionnaire

EVALUATION OF PROJECT

STDF/PG/133: Capacity building in the use of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Tool in the Pacific

This questionnaire is intended to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of STDF project 133: "*Capacity building in the use of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Tool in the Pacific*".

The information requested will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. Only consolidated results will be presented in the final report, without identifying individuals or agencies.

I would appreciate it if you could return the completed questionnaire to William Roberts (bill.roberts@grapevine.com.au) or by post to 46 Woolner Circuit, Hawker, ACT 2614 Australia by Wednesday 18 January 2012.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the questionnaire. Your participation in this evaluation is greatly appreciated. If you wish to discuss this questionnaire or any issues related to this review please contact me via my email address or by phone on +61419263007.

Questionnaire

Please answer all questions as best you can. Indicate your answer by circling/bolding/underlining your choice or deleting the answers not relevant. Feel free to provide comments if you feel the questions are not clear or you need to better explain your answers.

Name	
E-mail	
Telephone	
Institution	
Main role	

1. How relevant is/was the evaluation of your NPPO's capacity to meet SPS requirements to your job?
NOT RELEVANT SLIGHTLY RELEVANT VERY RELEVANT

2. Before the PCE training, what was your level of understanding of the capacity of your country to meet SPS requirements?
POOR AVERAGE GOOD

3. Other than the PCE tool is/was there any system in place (formal or informal) to evaluate the capacity of your country's phytosanitary system to meet SPS requirements?
NO BASIC SYSTEM WELL DEVELOPED SYSTEM
If there is/was a system in place please explain:

4. Was the training well designed and delivered?

a.	Was the level appropriate?	NO	YES
b.	Were sufficient technical resources provided?	NO	YES
c.	Was the training time sufficient?	NO	YES
d.	Did you have adequate time during the course to practice your new skills?	NO	YES
e.	Was sufficient feedback/testing/evaluation provided?	NO	YES

5. Did you find that the PCE training provided you with the skills and knowledge needed to evaluate your phytosanitary system?

NO SOME GOOD

6.In your view, were there areas in which further effort could have been made to improve the effectiveness of the training delivered?

7. Have you used the PCE tool since undertaking the course? NO YES

8. Has the PCE tool been used to evaluate your phytosanitary system?

a.	Associated with the training?	NO	YES
b.	Has been used since the training?	NO	YES

If answer NO to both (a) and (b) please specify why:

9. If the evaluation was done, do you have a good understanding of the results of this evaluation?

NO YES

10. If the evaluation was done, have changes/improvements been made in your phytosanitary system based on the findings of this evaluation? NO YES

If YES, please explain:

11. If NO to question 10. what is the major impediment to making improvements:

a.	Lack of resources?	NO	YES
b.	Insufficient technical capacity?	NO	YES
c.	Other (please specify)?		

12. Has your country's access to overseas markets for plants and plant products improved since the phytosanitary evaluation was conducted? NO YES

13. If NO to question 12. is this due to (choose both if relevant) :

a.	Difficulties in improving phytosanitary capacity to meet market requirements?	NO	YES
b.	Factors unrelated to SPS (e.g. production problems)?	NO	YES

If possible, please provide information about problems/factors:

14. If YES to question 12. is this due to (choose both if relevant):

a. Improved phytosanitary capacity resulting in meeting phytosanitary requirements of overseas markets? NO YES

b. Factors unrelated to SPS issues (e.g. better production systems)? NO YES

If possible, please provide information about improvements/factors:

15. Are there other follow-up training/capacity building activities that could significantly increase your countries capacity to meet phytosanitary market requirements? NO YES
If YES, please specify:

16. What lessons can be learned from the project that may be of importance to other countries and development partners and should be disseminated more broadly?

17. Additional comments regarding the design and/or the implementation of the project:

Annex 4 . Summary of questionnaire results

Question	**Response other countries**		**Country A**	
1, How relevant is/was the evaluation of your NPPO's capacity to meet SPS requirements to your job?	Not: 1		Not 0	
	Slight 2		Slight1	
	Very 4		Very 6	
2. Before the PCE training, what was your level of understanding of the capacity of your country to meet SPS requirements?	Poor 1		Poor 1	
	Average 5		Average 0	
	Good 1		Good 6	
3 Other than the PCE tool is/was there any system in place (formal or informal) to evaluate the capacity of your country's phytosanitary system to meet SPS requirements?	No 1		No 6	
	Basic 5		Basic 1	
	Well developed 0		Well developed 0	
4 Was the training well designed and delivered?	Level	No 1	Level	No 0
		Yes 6		Yes 7
	Tech resources	No 0	Tech resources	No 0
		Yes 7		Yes 7
	Time	No 4	Time	No 3
		Yes 3		Yes 4
	Practice time	No 6	Practice time	No 5
		Yes 2		Yes 1
	Feedback	No 4	Feedback	No 2
		Yes 3		Yes 5
5 Did you find that the PCE training provided you with the skills and knowledge needed to evaluate your phytosanitary system?	No 0		No 0	
	Some 3		Some 2	
	Good 4		Good 5	
7 Have you used the PCE tool since undertaking the course?	No 3		No 3	
	Yes 3		Yes 4	
8 Has the PCE tool been used to evaluate your phytosanitary system?	With the training	No 4	With the training	No 0
		Yes 3		Yes 7
	Since the training	No 5	Since the training	No 0
		Yes 1		Yes 7
9 If the evaluation was done, do you have a good understanding of the results of this evaluation?	No 2		No 0	
	Yes 4		Yes 7	
10 If the evaluation was done, have changes/improvements been made in your phytosanitary system based on the findings of this evaluation?	No 3		No 3	
	Yes 3		Yes 4	
11 If NO to question 10. what is the major impediment to making improvements:	Lack of resources	No 0	Lack of resources	No 0
		Yes 6		Yes 4
	Insufficient technical	No 0	Insufficient technical	No 0
		Yes 5		Yes 4
12 Has your country's access to overseas markets for plants and plant products improved since the phytosanitary evaluation was conducted?	No 4		No 2	
	Yes 2		Yes 5	

13 If NO to question 12. is this due to (choose both if relevant) :	Phytosan difficulties	No 2	Phytosan difficulties	No 0
		Yes 3		Yes 2
	Unrelated	No 0	Unrelated	No 0
		Yes 6		Yes 3
14 If YES to question 12. is this due to (choose both if relevant):	Improved phytosan	No 1	Improved phytosan	No 1
		Yes 1		Yes 5
	Unrelated	No 0	Unrelated	No 1
		Yes 2		Yes 4
15 Are there other follow-up training/capacity building activities that could significantly increase your countries capacity to meet phytosanitary market requirements?	No 0		No 4	
	Yes 5		Yes 3	

Annex 5. Simplified questionnaire extracted from the Project Termination Report.

QUESTIONNAIRE - BIOSECURITY CAPACITY BUILDING

1) Goal: Improved biosecurity of trade in the region.

1. To what extent can your countries achieve this goal?
   a. What are the current risks/challenges?
   b. What are the options to manage these risks/challenges?
   c. What resources are needed?
   d. What are the priorities?
2. What concrete steps are being taken at the national level?
3. What concrete steps are being taken at the national level?

2) Identification of impediments to trade in potential products.

1. List the products that have potential for export.
2. What are the current difficulties experienced for trade in these products?

3) Informed decision making by Pacific Island countries and territories regarding biosecurity risk management

1. What are the national policies in place for establishing and sustaining biosecurity?
2. What regional mechanisms and initiatives can be tapped to improve countries decision making capacities?
3. What capacity building initiatives are available currently or in the foreseeable future for countries to be able to improve their decision making processes where biosecurity is concerned.