



# Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access (PHAMA) Program

## Inception Report

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Prepared for  
AusAID

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**URS KALANG**

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Appendix A Summary of Major Inception Activities

## Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
AA	Administrative Assistant
ACIAR	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
ASP	Annual Strategic Plan
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BA	Biosecurity Australia
BNZ	Biosecurity New Zealand
CO	(PHAMA) Country Offices
DAFF	Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EU	European Union
FACT2	Enhanced Sustainable Livelihoods through Facilitating Increased Trade and Product Diversification (EC-funded)
FCPA	Foreign Corrupt Practices Act
GoA	Government of Australia
GoF	Government of Fiji
JOA	Joint Organisational Assessment
MA	Market Access
MAWG	Market Access Working Group
MDF	Market Development Facility (AusAID-funded)
MERI	Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement
MES	Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist
NMAC	National Market Access Coordinator
NPPO	National Plant Protection Office
PARDI	Pacific Agribusiness Research and Development Initiative (ACIAR-funded)
PCC	Program Coordinating Committee
PD	(URS) Program Director
PFO	Procurement and Finance Officer
PHAMA	Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Program
PIC	Pacific Island Countries
PM	(URS) Program Manager
PMAS	Principal Market Access Specialist
PMO	Program Management Office
QBS	Quarantine and Biosecurity Specialist
SA	Subsidiary Agreement
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
STA	Short Term Advisers
TL	Team Leader
TOR	Terms of Reference
URS	URS Australia Pty Ltd
VAT	Value-Added Tax

## Introduction

URS Australia Pty Ltd (URS), in association with Kalang Consultancy Services Pty Ltd (Kalang), has been awarded the contract for management of AusAID's Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access (PHAMA) Program. The contract was signed on 20 January 2011, with implementation of Phase 1 of the Program to proceed over a 30 month period through to 30 June 2013.

The objective of the Inception Report is to provide a roadmap of activities to be conducted during the Inception period, i.e. from mobilisation through to 31 March 2011 (when the three-month Strategic Plan will come into effect). The report includes: (i) a brief description of key activities to be implemented over this period; (ii) indicative timing of these activities; and (iii) lead responsibilities for implementation.

Activities planned over the period are based on the Draft Inception Plan as presented in the URS/Kalang tender, modified and detailed further where necessary to reflect changed conditions since the original proposal was prepared and to reflect the discussions and agreements reached during the mobilisation briefing in Melbourne on 27–28 January 2011.

## Operational and Management Activities

### 2.1 Key Issue Affecting Implementation Scheduling

The single major issue affecting start-up is the delay in finalisation of the Subsidiary Agreement (SA) between the Government of Australia (GoA) and the Government of Fiji (GoF). AusAID has advised that until such time as the SA is finalised, the team cannot visit Fiji or communicate with Fijian contacts, which in turn means delayed establishment of the Program Management Office (PMO), and delayed interaction with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Fiji Market Access Working Group (MAWG). URS is also unable to contract the Fiji National Market Access Coordinator (NMAC) and the nominated project PMO support staff. Inception scheduling has therefore been adjusted from the original proposal, which anticipated the logical sequence of mobilising to Fiji and establishment of the PMO, followed by a first round of country visits. Although not ideal, the team will now proceed with the first round of country visits (excluding Fiji), operating from their respective home bases, with all work in Fiji (including establishment of the PMO, subcontracting of staff and interaction with the Fiji MAWG and SPC) deferred until such time as the SA is finalised.

All the necessary bilateral arrangements to implement the program with the other four participating Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are in place.

### 2.2 Inception Workshop

An inception workshop was held for the core management team<sup>1</sup> on 27–28 January 2011 at the URS offices in Melbourne to: (i) review the contract and operational issues; (ii) review key reporting requirements; (iii) review team member roles and responsibilities; and (iv) review health and safety, Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), child protection and other cross-cutting policies.

AusAID and the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) provided comprehensive briefings to the team. A separate discussion was held with AusAID on a range of operational and contractual issues.<sup>2</sup>

### 2.3 Establishment of the PMO

On finalisation of the SA, the Team Leader (TL), Principal Market Access Specialist (PMAS), Quarantine and Biosecurity Specialist (QBS) and Program Manager (PM) will mobilise to Suva to establish the PMO and systems required to run PHAMA. Should the SA be finalised while the TL, PMAS and QBS are conducting their first round of country visits (scheduled from 13 February to 8 March 2011), establishment will be initiated by the PM supported by the Program Director (PD). Key activities involved in setting up the PMO will include: (i) negotiation with SPC of suitable office space and support services (power, water, telecoms); (ii) office refurbishment and fit out; (iii) procurement of PMO vehicle and equipment; and (iv) contracting, induction, and training of the Administrative Assistant (AA) and the Procurement and Finance Officer (PFO). The PM and PD (supported by the TL if available) will take the lead in these activities. The PMO will be established and operational within 10 working days of finalisation of the SA.

As soon as possible after entry to Fiji, the team will seek a briefing from Fiji Post on regional issues likely to affect implementation of the Program, particularly the prevailing security situation in Fiji.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Ingram – Program Director; Richard Holloway – Team Leader; Sarah Nicolson – Program Manager; Rob Duthie – Principal Market Access Specialist; Anna Duthie – Quarantine and Biosecurity Specialist; and Bridget Quennell – Program Administrator.

<sup>2</sup> The results of these discussions are summarised in an email from the PD to AusAID dated 1 February 2011.



## 2 Operational and Management Activities

URS has recommended to AusAID that:

- If the SA for Fiji is not available by 01 March 2011 (i.e. approximately ten days before the TL, PMAS and QBS are scheduled to return from the first round of country visits), consideration should be given to supporting the establishment of a temporary PMO in Australia; and
- If the delay in the SA being finalised extends beyond 31 March 2011, then an alternative permanent PMO location in the Pacific (probably Vanuatu or Tonga) be agreed as soon as possible after that date so that the Program can establish the permanent base necessary for efficient and coordinated implementation.

Clear communications protocols and procedures will be developed with all stakeholders from the outset, to be fully documented in the Communications and Media Strategy.

### 2.4 Finalisation of Program Management and Reporting Arrangements

URS will provide a preliminary PHAMA Code of Conduct to AusAID by 10 February 2011.

The TL and PM will agree with AusAID by 31 March 2011 on the format and content of the PHAMA Operations Manual; Financial Management Handbook; Implementation Plan for the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Framework; Risk Management Plan; and the Communications and Media Strategy. These documents will be submitted to AusAID post-Inception (by 20 May 2011), but preparation will commence in consultation with relevant Program staff and other stakeholders during the Inception period.

The TL and PM will also discuss and agree with AusAID by 1 March 2011 on the format and content of the Annual Strategic Plans (ASPs) and Six-monthly Progress Reports, with the first (three-month) Strategic Plan due by 11 March.

The TL and PMAS will commence preparation of preliminary public relations and promotional materials for the Program during Inception, to be completed by the end of April 2011.

Establishment of robust financial control and management procedures from the outset is a particularly critical aspect of overall program management. Appropriate procedures will be fully detailed in the PHAMA Operations Manual and Financial Management Handbook, once developed. As part of initial PMO establishment, the TL and PM will: (i) open a PHAMA operational bank account in Suva; (ii) establish financial authorisations and procedures; (iii) provide training to the PFO and AusAID in URS-compliant accounting and quality systems; (iv) establish procedures for producing internal and external statements of expenditure and variance from plan; (v) establish timesheet and payroll procedures and approvals for all PHAMA personnel; and (vi) establish operational procedures for selection and mobilisation of potential suppliers and service providers.

Following this (by the end of April 2011), the PFO will: (i) establish and maintain the PHAMA assets register; (ii) initiate registration for VAT; (iii) develop a procurement plan and schedule in line with the approved Strategic Plan; and (iv) establish an internal operational database.

### 2.5 Recruitment of NMACs and Establishment of Country Offices (COs)

All NMACs nominated in the Proposal have confirmed their availability and have been provided with draft contracts. It is planned to have the contracting process completed by 15 February 2011. An initial

## 2 Operational and Management Activities

briefing will be provided for each NMAC by the TL, PMAS and QBS during the first round of country visits, covering roles and responsibilities, as well as key operational aspects. The objective is to fully involve the NMACs in the lead-up to and conduct of the first formal MAWG meeting in each country (see following sections).

During the first round of country visits, the TL will confirm with each MAWG and NMAC the location and resourcing of the CO and the steps required to operationalise it. The PM will facilitate the set-up of these offices (to be completed by the end of March 2011) in close consultation with the NMACs.

As soon as practicable following establishment of the PMO and completion of the first round of country visits, the NMACs will be brought to Suva for induction training and introduction to SPC, AusAID, and other Suva-based stakeholders. The TL and PM will lead the management/organisational aspects of this training, and the PMAS and QBS will lead the technical aspects.

Prior to the induction training, the PM (in consultation with the TL and PMAS) will develop a framework for assessing the performance (and requirement for further professional development) of the NMACs at the end of their three month probation period, detailing what is to be assessed, by whom and how.<sup>3</sup> This framework will be discussed with the NMACs during their induction training.

### 2.6 Finalisation of MAWG Operational Details

During the first round of country visits, the TL, PMAS and QBS will finalise the set-up and operational details for the MAWGs, building on the work already completed during the pre-start-up phase.

At a general level, this will involve consultation with relevant Ministries and other key stakeholders (such as private sector and grower/exporter representative organisations) to:

- Further discuss the overall scope of the Program and implementation roles and responsibilities;
- Introduce the NMACs;
- Clarify the process to be followed for gaining formal endorsement of the MAWGs by the respective national Governments; and
- Establish communication processes and protocols.

Formal written endorsement of the MAWG by Government (most likely by the National Plant Protection Office (NPPO)) will be sought, with a target completion date for all countries of the end of March 2011.

More detailed operational aspects of the MAWG will be reviewed and finalised during the inaugural meeting of each MAWG, to be convened during the first round of country visits. Specifically, these first meetings will be used to: finalise membership; finalise the MAWG Service Charter; introduce and seek endorsement of the nominated NMAC; review and approve the NMAC Terms of Reference (TOR); agree on the terms of the three month probation period for the NMACs; endorse proposed arrangements for location and operation of the CO; outline annual planning, meeting and reporting requirements; agree on effective working relationship and communication protocols (which will be formalised in the Communications and Media strategy); initiate the discussion as to how cross-cutting issues will be addressed; and, most importantly, initiate the ongoing strategic and management dialogue on how to achieve sustainability and 'industry ownership' of the MAWG process.

<sup>3</sup> Specific performance indicators for NMACs, and the role of the MAWGs and PMO in assessing performance against these, will need particularly careful consideration. Note that the probation period will end in April i.e. past the end of the Inception period.



## 2 Operational and Management Activities

Agreed MAWG operational guidelines and decisions will be formally minuted and reported back to the MAWGs. NMACs will be requested to maintain meeting records and develop draft meeting minutes, with the assistance of the PMAS and QBS. The aim will be to develop NMAC capacity to ensure that draft meeting minutes will be available for MAWG consideration and comment within two days of meetings, whenever possible.

### 2.7 Finalisation of Arrangements for Implementing MERI

Due to the delay in signing the SA between GoA and GoF, and the associated delay in establishing the PMO in Fiji, the timing of the first input by the Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist (MES) will slip to April 2011. This means that the candidate originally proposed by URS for this position is unlikely to be available, due to other commitments. The PM is currently identifying a suitable replacement for proposal to AusAID. This process should be completed by the end of February 2011.

The first input by the MES, tentatively scheduled for April 2011 (immediately following the three-month Inception period), will: (i) finalise the MERI Framework<sup>4</sup>; (ii) develop a detailed MERI Implementation Plan; and (iii) conduct necessary training of Project staff that have MERI responsibilities (especially the MAWGs and NMACs).

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<sup>4</sup> Reflecting issues discussed with AusAID during the pre-mobilisation briefing.

## Technical Activities

### 3.1 Development of Initial Market Access (MA) Priorities and Associated Action Plans

In addition to finalising operational details for the MAWGs, as outlined in Section 2.6, the inaugural meeting of the MAWGs will: (i) further consider the *process* used to prioritise MA issues introduced during the pre-start-up workshops; (ii) re-apply the process to confirm the top one to two initial priorities for each country to be immediately addressed by PHAMA; and (iii) develop summary action plans to address top priorities, including timelines and clear specification of inputs required to address the issue (including STA inputs). This process will be actively facilitated by the PMAS, QBS, and NMACs. Action plans will be further developed by the PMAS and QBS in terms of budget requirements and operational details, and reported back to the MAWGs through the NMACs for final endorsement. They will then be incorporated into the three-month Strategic Plan that will be submitted to AusAID by 11 March 2011. Once endorsed by the Program Coordinating Committee (PCC), the three-month Strategic Plan will set the framework for initial allocation of Program resources to address specific MA priorities.

MA priorities and associated action plans, as discussed and agreed by the MAWGs, will be formally minuted and reported back to the MAWGs within two days of the inaugural (and every subsequent) meeting.

### 3.2 Mobilisation of Short Term Advisers (STAs)

Specific technical STA inputs will be determined based on the MA priorities and associated action plans developed by the MAWGs, and subsequently included in the Strategic Plans for AusAID approval. The first of these Strategic Plans – the three-month bridging Plan covering the period 1 April to 30 June 2011 – falls outside the initial Inception period. There is therefore no requirement for STA inputs to address MA priorities during the Inception period (up to 31 March 2011).

However, there is an urgent MA issue that may justify immediate action to protect existing trade, where PHAMA *could* provide immediate assistance (outside of the Strategic Plan process) subject to approval by AusAID and the Fiji MAWG. This issue relates to continued pest interceptions on exports of taro to Australia and New Zealand from Fiji. An additional activity that could perhaps also be justified outside of the Strategic Plan process is an audit of the PICs' exotic fruit fly and invasive ant monitoring networks that currently underpin various MA protocols, as these appear to be in decline or non-existent. This would also provide an early entry point for assistance to be delivered by SPC under Component 4.

The PMAS and QBS will further consider these opportunities for immediate intervention together with the relevant MAWGs and other stakeholders, and make a recommendation to AusAID by the third week of March 2011 on whether STA inputs in these areas are justified outside of the Strategic Plan process.

### 3.3 Establishment of a MA Database

From early February 2011 onwards, the PMAS and QBS will initiate the establishment of an organised physical database designed to manage information on: (i) current markets that are already accessible to individual PICs and their phytosanitary requirements; (ii) key risks to existing MA (including biosecurity issues such as the possible introduction of exotic pests); (iii) adequacy of phytosanitary systems that underpin an existing market; and (iv) changing quarantine conditions of importing

### 3 Technical Activities

countries. This will provide a baseline information resource that can be used by the MAWG to: (i) help determine MA priorities; (ii) identify MA risks; (iii) make better-informed decisions on whether to improve or protect existing markets; and (iv) identify possible biosecurity issues that may be addressed by other programs.

Development of this database will be progressive and cumulative. The PMAS and QBS, in association with the NMACs, will consult with the importing country for verification of information gathered, where possible. NMACs will have ownership of individual PIC data on behalf of the MAWG, and will be encouraged to work closely with government officials to: verify existing export data; determine if exports have occurred under existing protocols (and if not, why not); identify any perceived risks to existing trade; and initiate discussions to assess the adequacy of phytosanitary systems that underpin MA.

## Coordination and Communication Activities

### 4.1 Conduct of AusAID / Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Country Briefings

As noted in Section 2.3, immediately following entry to Fiji the team will seek a briefing from Fiji Post on regional issues likely to affect implementation of the Program, particularly the prevailing security and diplomatic situation in Fiji. If at all possible, the PD will attend this meeting.

During the first round of country visits, the team will meet with AusAID and DFAT personnel at Post to: provide a general briefing on the Program; solicit advice on local conditions that may have an impact on implementation approaches; discuss communication processes and protocols; and introduce the NMACs.

### 4.2 Establishment of the PCC

AusAID has developed a draft TOR for the PCC, setting out membership and defining broad roles. The TL and PD provided comment to AusAID on this draft on 4 February 2011. AusAID will be responsible for finalising the TOR and for approaching prospective members – with the exception of the MAWG Chairs, who will be briefed by the TL. The inaugural PCC meeting should be scheduled for the third week of March 2011, timed to coincide with endorsement of the three-month Strategic Plan. AusAID will convene this meeting, with all briefing papers prepared by the TL.

### 4.3 Coordination with SPC

In early March 2011, following completion of the initial country visits and establishment of the PMO, the TL, PMAS, QBS and PD will define with SPC (Biosecurity and Trade Services Division) planning, coordination, communication and reporting mechanisms to ensure as close a linkage as possible is forged between Managing Contractor-executed Components 1–3 and SPC-executed Component 4. Specific points of coordination and cooperation for the period of the three-month Strategic Plan (1 April – 30 June 2011) will be identified and reflected in the Strategic Plan.

The team will discuss processes and procedures required to support SPC to undertake a Joint Organisational Assessment (JOA) as per the URS proposal. The JOA is designed to identify the immediate and longer-term requirements for capacity building to strengthen SPC's work in providing PICs with MA support, thereby enhancing Program sustainability. JOA outcomes will be incorporated into the ASP.

### 4.4 Coordination with Biosecurity Australia (BA) and Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ)

At the time of the initial PCC meeting (third week of March 2011), the TL, PMAS and QBS will take the opportunity to meet separately with representatives to the PCC from BA and BNZ to: (i) provide a general briefing on PHAMA (especially for BNZ); (ii) gain an understanding of the relevant institutional work programs related to MA requests from PICs, together with procedures and current issues that are likely to have an impact on PHAMA; (iii) discuss the initial MA priorities identified by the MAWGs (from the first round of meetings) and how these might be accommodated; (iv) seek comment on the initial Program timelines and schedules for development and reporting of MAWG workplans; (v) determine resourcing capacities, job descriptions and status of funding for the Pacific Coordinator positions within these agencies; and (vi) agree on and establish formal communications and coordination mechanisms. These initial discussions will be followed up with more detailed meetings in

## 4 Coordination and Communication Activities

Canberra and Wellington in late April 2011. Efforts will be made to involve relevant SPC staff in these meetings, in line with developing SPC's capacity to provide PICs with MA support.

### 4.5 Coordination with Relevant Donors and Projects

The TL and PMAS are already moving to identify and initiate discussions with relevant donor, national government, and private sector projects and programs, such as the European Union (EU) Facilitating Agricultural Commodity Trade (FACT2), Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) Pacific Agribusiness Research and Development Initiative (PARDI), and AusAID Market Development Facility (MDF). These programs have the potential to provide support for the development of supply chains, thus complementing the use of PHAMA resources to address technical MA issues. Information on opportunities for linking with other programs and projects will be routinely passed on to the NMACs and MAWGs. The MAWGs can then move to forge operational linkages at national level (with PHAMA facilitation if required) in order to develop a more integrated approach to addressing technical and non-technical MA issues, broader supply chain issues, and cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and social inclusion.

The TL will commence preparation of an initial summary of key information on relevant projects in late March 2011, for distribution to the NMACs and MAWGs in April 2011. At a higher level, the TL will also develop and document structured coordination arrangements with relevant projects such as PARDI and FACT2 by the end of March 2011.

## Limitations

URS Corporation Pty Ltd (URS) has prepared this report in accordance with the usual care and thoroughness of the consulting profession for the use of AusAID and only those third parties who have been authorised in writing by URS to rely on the report. It is based on generally accepted practices and standards at the time it was prepared. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report. It is prepared in accordance with the scope of work and for the purpose outlined in the Proposal dated 14 September 2010.

The methodology adopted and sources of information used by URS are outlined in this report. URS has made no independent verification of this information beyond the agreed scope of works and URS assumes no responsibility for any inaccuracies or omissions. No indications were found during our investigations that information contained in this report as provided to URS was false.

This report was prepared between 27 January 2011 and 7 February 2011 and is based on the conditions encountered and information reviewed at the time of preparation. URS disclaims responsibility for any changes that may have occurred after this time.

This report should be read in full. No responsibility is accepted for use of any part of this report in any other context or for any other purpose or by third parties.



## Appendix A Summary of Major Inception Activities

Major Activities	Month→	January				February				March				April			
	Week →	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Period covered by Inception Report				←————→													
Contract signed																	
Inception Workshop, Melbourne	PD, PM																
Prepare and submit PHAMA Code of Conduct	PM						X										
Establishment of PCC	AusAID, TL																
PMO set-up	PM, TL																
Establishment of PMO management / operating systems	PM, PFO, TL																
Contracting of NMACs	PM																
Provide initial briefings for NMACs	TL, PMAS, QBS																
First round of MAWG meetings	TL, PMAS, QBS																
Finalisation of operating details for each MAWG	TL, PMAS, QBS																
Formal endorsement of MAWGs by national governments	TL																
Finalisation of initial MA priorities and action plans	PMAS, QBS																
Briefings with AusAID/DFAT personnel in-country	TL, PMAS, QBS																
Briefings with other PIC stakeholders	TL, PMAS, QBS																
Establishment of Country Offices	PM, TL																
Agreement with AusAID on three-month Strategic Plan format	TL, PM																
Agreement with SPC on workplan coordination etc.	Team																
Prepare and submit three-month Strategic Plan	TL, PM																
Convene PCC meeting (to endorse three-month Strategic Plan)	AusAID, TL																
Discuss work program with BA and BNZ	TL, PMAS, QBS																
Preparation of workplans and assessment approach for NMACs	TL, PMAS, PM																
Induction training for NMACs (in Suva)	Team																

## Appendix A

Major Activities	Month→	January				February				March				April			
	Week →	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Compilation of MA database	PMAS, QBS																
Provide briefings for other projects (e.g. FACT2, PARDI)	TL, PMAS																
Compilation of summary information on other projects	TL																
Agree with AusAID on report/manual formats	TL, PM																
Development of Operational Manual	PM, TL																
Development of Financial Management Handbook	PM																
Development of Implementation Plan for MERI	MES, TL																
Development of Communications and Media Strategy	TL, PM, PMAS																
Development of Risk Management Plan	PD, TL																
Development of public relations and promotional material	TL, PMAS																
Plan, prepare for JOA in support of ASP																	
	Month→	January				February				March				April			
	Week →	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

X = Milestone activity

Note: The scheduling indicated above assumes that the SA between GoA and GoF is completed in sufficient time to allow mobilisation to Fiji by 1 March 2011 for PMO set-up, etc.



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