

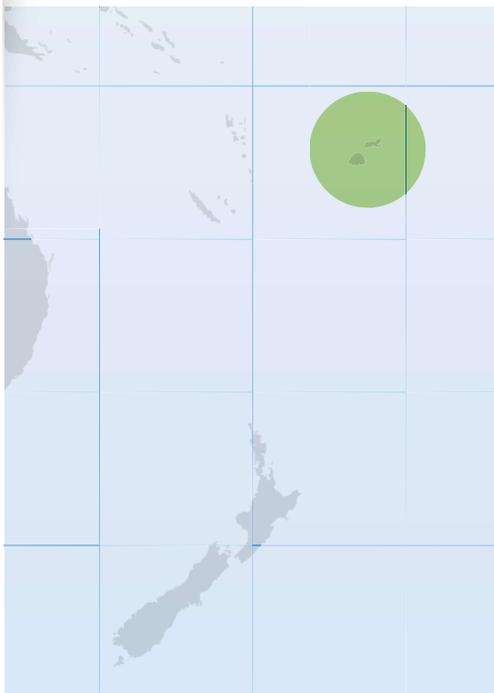


The agriculture sector is critical to Fiji's economy and important for food security. Agriculture represents\*:

- the livelihoods of 29% of the working population
- the main source of work for more than 83% of rural population
- 9% of GDP

\*These statistics do not take into consideration the informal working population.

In Fiji, a small-island state dependent on the efficient flows of trade via sea and air, agriculture represents the main source of income for a large percentage of the working population. Goods such as kava, taro, ginger, papaya, pineapples, eggplant, okra and breadfruit are exported to countries including Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Canada, China, ones within the European Union block, and neighbouring Pacific Island countries.



A phytosanitary certificate is a legal document issued by a country's National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) for exports of plants and goods of plant origin certifying that they are free of specific pests and diseases. In Fiji, the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) holds the mandate to ensure phytosanitary safety of agricultural products.

In 2020, BAF started to digitalise its phytosanitary process with the implementation of the IPPC ePhyto Solution through the Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS) however gaps remained: electronic exchange was confined to New Zealand and the entire phytosanitary certification process was still fully paper with no companies connected to the GeNS system.

In a strategic move towards boosting its economy and enhancing food security, the government of Fiji reached out to the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (the Alliance) to work with BAF and the private sector to finalise the digitalisation process and take the necessary steps to realise the GeNS' full potential.

## ADDRESSING THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION'S TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT

**Article 7.1**  
Pre-arrival  
processing

**Article 7.9**  
Perishable  
goods

**Article 10.1**  
Formalities and  
documentation  
requirements



## WHAT WE DID

From April 2022 to May 2023, the Alliance supported BAF in reviewing and revising its procedures to make better use of the GeNS application, including:

- Connecting enterprises and priority BAF remote offices to the system and providing appropriate training in new systems
- Revising and implementing new procedures to handle electronic phytosanitary certificates for non-registered exporters
- Reviewing procedures for High Temperature Forced Air (HTFA) phytosanitary treatment certification, which were fully manual and were not integrated into GeNS
- Providing assistance in exchanging ePhytos with the country's main trading partners
- Developing and delivering a range of training and change management activities, both for BAF officers and private sector operators, to secure the ongoing use and development of the GeNS application.

## MAHENS EXPORT

Mahens Export, a family-owned business in the Sigatoka Area, exports fresh vegetables and fruits to Auckland, New Zealand, by air cargo. Timeliness is of the essence as the goods only have a shelf life of 5 days.

Since the adoption of the ePhyto Solution in Fiji, the company no longer has to dedicate a driver and vehicle to the process of requesting a phytosanitary certificate in town. Instead, with the time and cost saved, Mahens can get two additional workers in the facility and have five or six cartons of okra packed.

Mahens can now focus on getting their two shipments a week, requiring about 100 certificates a year, to happy customers in New Zealand and beyond.



“The ePhyto solution is a game changer for our export line. There is no more waiting time for the approval and issue of the certificates. The GeNs allows exporters to be more efficient”

**Ranitesh Kumar, General Manager,  
Mahens Export**

The project successfully concluded in March 2023, with 76 companies newly connected to the new system. Adopting the IPPC Solution has enabled traders to exchange ePhyto certificates with all key trading partners via a central exchange, and the impact will continue to grow once Australia and New Zealand, key trading partners, start exchanging via the IPPC hub.

## LAMI KAVA



Lami Kava was the first company to register with GeNS in Fiji and started using the new solution right away! A small company with 30 employees, it couldn't wait to free up the three employees tied to the process of obtaining phytosanitary certificates needed for the dried kava - a plant used in the popular traditional beverage and one of the largest Fijian agricultural exports - shipped commercially to Australia, New Zealand, USA and the Pacific Island Countries.

Not only is valuable time saved with ePhytos, but Edward Hoerder, the General Manager, also appreciates no longer having to waste as much paper.

“Transitioning to the system was a no-brainer. This is a positive step for Fiji. We have already seen the benefits and are excited for when more countries join the Hub and accept ePhytos”

**Edward Hoerder, General Manager, Lami Kava**



## THE IMPACTS

The transition to ePhyto supports trade facilitation and is projected to save Fijian exporters 56% of phytosanitary processing time and \$6 per certificate. Beyond those quantitative benefits, electronic phytosanitary certificates:

- allow quick, accurate, low-cost exchange of phytosanitary certificates
- alleviate administrative burden on border agencies as well as traders
- enhance competitiveness by introducing a seamless, transparent system that generates greater confidence in quality and origin
- help in levelling the playing field for MSMEs by supporting their integration into global supply chains
- provide greater transparency, making it more attractive for importers to do business with Fijian exporters
- increase food security through quicker border clearance, lessening food spoilage and waste



# MANASA EXPORT

For Manasa Export, the use of ePhytos has allowed them to save more than three hours of driving per shipment. Even better as a benefit, though, is the long-term value of increased trust that now exists between employees and BAF officers. Before, when a mistake was made in the certificate, it took a few back and forths between Manasa Export and the BAF station in Sigatoka or BAF HQ in Suva. No longer an issue, the relationship between private sector and public sector stakeholders has improved.

**100%** of stakeholders surveyed agree that public private cooperation increased

**79%** of stakeholders reported increased trust in their public or private sector counterpart

**100%** of stakeholders surveyed agree the project made trade processes and requirements more transparent



Jeshwini Varma, Manasa Export



System launch event, Fiji Times, 29 March 2023



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To get involved or for more information, please contact us at [info@tradefacilitation.org](mailto:info@tradefacilitation.org) [www.tradefacilitation.org](http://www.tradefacilitation.org)

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