

EPHYTO IMPLEMENTATION CASE STORY

QUESTIONNAIRE

Country	Fiji
NPPO	Biosecurity Authority of Fiji
Contact Person	Mr Surend Pratap, Mr. Nilesh A. Chand, Mr. Riten Gosai
Designation	Acting Chief Executive Officer, Chief Plant Protection Officer, Senior Plant Protection Officer
Date	12 May 2021

TYPE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Please indicate if you have implemented ePhyto through:
Yes, the IPPC Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS)
Briefly describe your ePhyto implementation setup (maximum 150 words)
All phytosanitary certificates for commercial consignments for all countries are generated through GeNS. However, exchange (transmissions and receivables) of ePhyto is currently only with New Zealand effective 01 July 2020 (paper certificates are simultaneously exchanged as a back-up during this transition phase). For all other countries, ePhyto paper hardcopies are provided. ePhytos are only processed from two locations, that is, BAF Headquarters in Suva and BAF Office in Nadi Airport, Fiji. Phytosanitary certificates for personal consignments are issued manually from respective BAF locality offices. ePhyto has currently not been deployed to exporters company level – only sits with the NPPO currently for all data inputs and processing for issuance.
Please also indicate briefly (maximum 150 words) the main reasons for your choice of implementation model (i.e. GeNS or National System)
BAF implemented GeNS and not its own national electronic phytosanitary certificate system due to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Converting BAF’s national system and connecting it to the IPPC hub would have required major customization and infrastructure upgrade that would have attracted a lot of costs. It was more economical to use GeNS with a quick turnaround of ePhyto implementations. - Modification of Fiji’s national system would have caused substantial delays in Fiji being able to join other countries in the region in the quickest time to implement ePhyto (efficiency). - GeNS is a globally harmonized approach for electronic certification and also user-friendly, hence BAF saw it beneficial overall to use this approach.

BASIC ePHYTO STATISTICS FOR YOUR COUNTRY

How many ePhytos do you transmit and receive per month through the IPPC ePhyto Hub (average over the past 3 months)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - February 01 2021 – April 30 2021 - Export = 1039 - Re-Export = not able to pull this data through GeNS; all certificates processed as “Export” - Import = 499 (NZ only)
What main countries are you exchanging ePhytos with via the IPPC ePhyto Hub?
New Zealand
Are there new countries to and from which you are now trading as a result of implementing ePhyto?
No

PROJECT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

How did you organise the implementation of ePhyto in your country? Was a project team or steering group established to guide the project?
<p>An expression of interest letter was written to the IPPC in January 2019 after which a team from BAF travelled to Samoa NPPO in May 2019 to observe and partake in an ePhyto training for the Samoa Quarantine and Inspection Services (SQIS) staff. The BAF Team also met and held discussions with Dr. Peter Neimanis (DAWE, Australia), Mr Fredchook (FAO) and Mr. Venkat (UNICC) as well as Samoan industry representatives.</p> <p>Upon return to Fiji, an internal ePhyto Working Group was established comprising of the following staff members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief Executive Officer (CEO) - Chief Plant Protection Officer (CPPO) - Senior Plant Protection Officer (SPPO) - Systems Administrator (SA) - Coordinator-Executive Office (C-EO) - Plant Pathologist (PP) - Team Leader Trade Facilitation & Compliance (TLTFC) - Phyto & Permit Officers (PPO) (x4) <p>Then BAF received the UAT version of GeNS and began testing and fine-tuning the system to meet its business requirements. Consistent communication between BAF, DAWE (Dr. Peter Neimanis) and UNICC helped with system improvements to suit our needs. The working group, led by SA, C-EO, SPPO and PP conducted awareness and training on ePhyto for staffs in all major divisions around Fiji (Central/ Eastern, Western and Northern) – a total of 170 staffs were trained. Awareness was also conducted for exporters/exporter groups at the same time. Fiji then began piloting the exchange with Samoa and New Zealand, alongside addressing any issues and undertaking continuous improvements. BAF then notified IPPC of its intention to issue phytosanitary certificates for commercial consignments to all countries through GeNS before going live with New Zealand on 01 July 2020.</p>

If yes, who participated in the team – what agencies and at what level (we do not need to know the specific names of the team members)?
Information on BAF internal working group is captured above. Awareness was also created for exporters/exporter groups (Quality Controllers) but none are included in the working group at this stage
How were the key Stakeholders identified?
All BAF registered exporters/exporter groups were invited to the awareness sessions. Regional representative from Pacific Plant Protection Organization (PPPO Secretariat)
What process did you have for consulting with these key stakeholders?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exporters = Awareness workshop (one full day) - Engagement with PPPO = Regional IPPC workshop - ePhyto Launch = Exporter Consultation (half-day) followed by launch (going live with NZ)
Were the stakeholders engaged in the design of the ePhyto service?
Yes, views were taken on-board through awareness and consultation sessions. This feedback formed the basis on which Fiji went live with New Zealand. Further involvement will be solicited from exports/exporter groups when ePhyto is rolled out at the “company” level.
What process did you undertake to get buy-in from senior management in your NPPO?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing benefits of the GeNS including awareness materials that were produced by the IPPC - Sharing updates from IPPC workshops and meetings - Conducting internal meetings and proposing business case for Fiji - Positive contribution of the project through automation of processes
Did you do a Business Process Analysis (BPA) of the existing paper processes before designing and implementing the ePhyto service (including a cost comparison)?
Yes, BAF conducted internal cost-comparison and business process analyses
If yes, did you use this to develop the new procedures?
Yes, BAF developed new SOP for ePhyto issuance
Was any other research undertaken?
A feasibility study was undertaken by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on BAF’s Automated Biosecurity Management Information System (ABMIS) whereby electronic certification (ePhyto) was a study component
Was there a pilot project? If yes, please describe (e.g. what countries and or products were chosen)?
Yes, ePhyto testing and exchange was piloted with Samoa, New Zealand, Australia and USA
How long did it take from the initial discussions on ePhyto in your country to the first exchange of Production ePhytos through the Hub?
1 year and 6 months (January 2019 to July 01, 2020)
Did implementing ePhyto take more or less time than you expected?
It took a little more time than anticipated (BAF internal working group had envisaged first exchange within 1 year)

What was your biggest challenge to overcome in implementing ePhyto in your country?

GeNS testing and fine-tuning to meet Fiji's phytosanitary certificate issuance requirements (in consideration of Fiji's needs and capacities)

Conducting training of officers and awareness in all major trading areas of the country as Fiji is made up of many islands and BAF had 22 regional offices to work with (required excessive planning; costs were high)

Internet connectivity as GeNS is a web-based application (one of the main reasons why BAF has not been able to implement ePhyto for personal consignments)

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, CHANGE MANAGEMENT**Was there resistance from any specific sectors or agencies in establishing the service? If so, how was this handled?**

No, BAF awareness and benefit sharing of GeNS ensured support from all stakeholders

Was a specific Change Management programme implemented? If so, please describe.

- No, BAF internal working grouped absorbed ePhyto work into their schedules
- Phyto and Permit Officers that were issuing phytosanitary certificates using Fiji's national system were transitioned to GeNS

What kind of training was provided for users?

- Theoretical and practical (hands-on) sessions for BAF officers
- Theoretical awareness sessions for exporters/exporter groups (training will be conducted for exporter reps when ePhyto is rolled out to company level)

Do you provide any helpdesk or customer service?

- IT, C-EO and SPPO provide assistance to officers as and when required

COMMUNICATIONS**How were the stakeholders kept informed about the ePhyto implementation progress?**

- Through awareness workshops
- Through BAF Alerts
- Through informal "talanoa style" discussions

How did you promote ePhyto to the business community, other stakeholders?

- Through media releases, newspaper articles and sharing of ePhyto publications from IPPC
- Through BAF's social media page (Facebook)

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

How did you monitor and evaluate progress in implementing ePhyto and in achieving the project objectives? What Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) did you use?

- An “action plan” was developed with indicators and timelines – approved by Executive Office
- Sharing of consistent updates on progress with Executive Office
- Officers part of the BAF internal working group included ePhyto work in their KPIs

BENEFITS OBTAINED

What are the main benefits generated by the introduction of ePhyto?

- (1) For your NPPO
 - Beforehand information and improved planning for the arrival and clearance of goods
 - Expedited clearance of commodities from the ports including pre-clearance where there is an opportunity to do this
 - Efficient replacement of erroneous certificates; easier to search and locate certificates when required (especially for past years)
 - Access to certificates from any location
 - Reduced costs (no longer need to print many documents)
 - Improved efficiencies by reduced data entry and validation
 - Easier data retrieval from the system and report preparation
- (2) For Companies
 - Not applicable at this time (system not rolled out to companies yet)
- (3) Others?
 - Exporters – reduced costs of labor and transportation (to apply and receive certificates)
 - Agents – reduced costs and time efficiencies (no need to print certificates for consignment clearance)

What problems did it solve?

- Reduced manual handling of certificates – BAF has had previous cases of lost, mutilated and damaged certificates for which replacements were required
- Enabled BAF to connect to the hub – would have been difficult connecting to the hub with BAF’s own electronic system
- Certification fraud was eliminated

Is it possible to put a dollar value on the benefits achieved?

Yes, however a full cost-benefit-analysis may be required to ascertain the correct dollar value. From simple internal calculations, BAF estimates FJD 55,000 cost saved on paper alone per year and FJD 1.9M on Biosecurity Officer involvement (screening documents, waiting for documents), administrative costs, transportation and logistics (vehicle use and fuel) and reduced non-compliances.

COSTS AND SUSTAINABILITY

How much did it cost to establish ePhyto in your country?
BAF estimates the initial costs from January 2019 up to the time of launch on July 01, 2020 to be around FJD 0.5M.
What were the main costs areas?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost of time commitment for the BAF internal working group that spearheaded the ePhyto work including testing and piloting the system - Awareness and training workshops for BAF staff and exporters - Travel (local and overseas workshops and training) - IT infrastructure (hardware and internet connectivity)
What are the ongoing operational costs (annual)?
IT infrastructure (hardware and internet connectivity) Phytosanitary certificate processing officers (salaries and other benefits)
Do you charge for issuing a Phytosanitary Certificate? If yes, what is the charge per certificate?
Yes (FJD 42.51)
Are there any additional user fees for ePhyto?
No
If yes, Do the revenues generated cover operational costs?
Yes
Are the revenues (if any) reinvested in the facility?
Yes
How will the facility/service be sustained over the coming years?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BAF internal funding - Donor funding for infrastructure upgrade and training (for rolling out ePhyto for personal consignments and to companies) - Review of existing Fees structure (user pay basis)

FUNDING SOURCE(S)

How was the implementation of ePhyto funded?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BAF internal funding - Some IPPC support for capacity building as stated below
Did you receive Donor Support? If so, please describe.
Yes, for capacity building (travel to Malaysia and Japan workshops)

CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Describe any capacity building or technical assistance you received, including the source:
(1) to conceptualise and design your country's approach to ePhyto <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical assistance was received from Dr. Peter Neimanis and Team in regards to customization of GeNS according to Fiji's needs - IPPC provided some funding for travel (awareness and trainings)
(2) to actually implement ePhyto None

LEGISLATION CHANGES REQUIRED

Were any specific legislation changes necessary?
No. The next legislation review will strengthen the ePhyto components of the law.
If so, what was the process and how long did this take?
N/A
How is the privacy of information protected?
BAF IT policy applies to protection of all information and confidentiality (officer information and password, exporter's details and export information, etc.)

TECHNOLOGY

What were the additional hardware or software or Internet facilities required to introduce ePhyto in your NPPO?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purchasing of Desktop PCs, Laptops, Tablets, Mobiles, Wi-Fi Devices, Printers (for countries currently not exchanging via hub) - Increasing bandwidth for certain stations in the rural regions

SUCCESS FACTORS AND LESSONS LEARNED

What are the main lessons learned from implementing this service?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should always have a back-up for electronic/web-based systems (for GeNS, certificates can be manually processed when the system is down, or when there is no power or internet) - NPPO personnel should always be updated on the system including enhancements and ensure it is tested and working - Countries should have adequate IT infrastructure and capabilities (trained staff) to implement and run with the process - Countries should identify and allocate resources (including funding) appropriately - Initial implementation requires a dedicated team with time and resources at hand 	
What were the crucial success factors?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training for officers who are part of the BAF internal working group. These officers conducted awareness and training for BAF officers - Support from BAF Executive Office - Support from IPPC and UNICC including Dr. Peter Neimanis and Team - Support from other countries in testing the system 	
What were the greatest obstacles?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding for training and awareness - Internet connectivity 	
What are the biggest obstacles to further development of the Facility/service?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding for training and awareness - Internet connectivity - Support and uptake of the system by companies when this is rolled out in Fiji 	
Are you or other colleagues available to be resources to other countries implementing ePhyto?	
<p>-Yes, BAF expresses interest in training counterparts and the following staff as master trainers for GeNS to provide assistance to Fiji and regional NPPOs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Mr. Kritesh Sharma – BAF Systems Administrator · Mr. Mohammed Ifraaz – BAF Coordinator-Executive Office · Mr. Riten Gosai – BAF Senior Plant Protection Officer · Mr. Nitesh Chand – BAF Plant Pathologist 	

CONTACT DETAILS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Website:	www.baf.com.fj
Contact details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BAF Office: (679) 3312512 Email: ephyto@baf.com.fj