PACER Plus
IMPLEMENTATION UNIT

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Activity Title:	Vapour Heat Treatment (VHT) Expert to Support the Validation and Operationalisation of VHT Protocols for Fruit Flies in the Solomon Islands
Estimated Duration:	7 months
Estimated Budget:	AUD 44,000
Location:	Remote travel to Solomon Islands
Estimated Start Date:	November 2026
Reporting to:	Trade in Goods Adviser

I. BACKGROUND

PACER Plus is a regional trade and development agreement that supports Pacific Island Parties to strengthen their capacity to trade, improve access to regional and international markets, and realise greater economic and development benefits from trade. Through its Development and Economic Cooperation programme, PACER Plus supports Parties to address trade constraints and strengthen private sector participation in export markets.

The Agreement combines market access commitments with a DEC Work Programme. During this cycle, Parties have agreed to a more disciplined approach to implementation prioritising, sequencing and measuring results so that collective effort is focused where it can deliver the greatest impact.

The Solomon Islands Government installed a Vapour Heat Treatment (VHT) facility in 2025 to support market access for fresh produce exports. To ensure the facility is effectively utilised, Biosecurity Solomon Islands (BSI) requires technical support to establish operational systems, develop procedures, build staff capacity, and strengthen coordination with growers and exporters. A VHT specialist will be engaged to support the operationalisation of the facility and its integration into the export value chain.

II. OBJECTIVE & SCOPE

The main objectives of the consultancy are to:

1. Establish operational systems and procedures for the VHT facility;
2. Build the capacity of BSI officers and industry stakeholders in VHT operations and compliance;
3. Improve supply chain coordination and utilisation of the facility to support exports.

To achieve the above objectives, the Consultant is required to:

i. Assess the VHT facility and recommend an operational layout and product flow;
ii. Develop SOPs, operational procedures, monitoring systems, and documentation requirements;
iii. Deliver practical training and mentoring for BSI staff and relevant stakeholders;
iv. Support growers and exporters to improve post-harvest handling and export readiness;
v. Work with the entomologist to support heat tolerance trials and integrate findings into facility operations;
vi. Work closely with BSI, MAL, exporters, growers and relevant stakeholders to promote coordinated planning across the export supply chain to develop an efficient and sustainable export system;

vii. Provide recommendations to maximise utilisation and sustainability of the facility; and
viii. Ensure all outputs consider gender, disability, and social inclusion principles.

III. DELIVERABLES

The Consultant will deliver the following outputs:

1. Inception Report and Work Plan.
2. VHT Facility Layout Design and Draft SOPs.
3. Training Materials and Delivery of Capacity Building Activities.
4. Final SOPs and VHT Operations Manual.
5. Final Consultancy Report.

All outputs shall be provided in Microsoft Office formats or other formats agreed with the PPIU.

IV. TIME AND PAYMENT SCHEDULES

The Activity shall be completed within a period of no longer than seven (7) months, according to the indicative timeframes below. Exact commencement and completion dates, as well as the scope of work, may be amended in consultation with the PPIU and Biosecurity Solomon Islands.

No.	Deliverables	Indicative Time Frame (delivered by)	Payment Schedule
1.	Inception Report and Work Plan	November 2026	10%
2.	VHT Facility Layout Design and Draft SOPs.	December 2026	25%
3.	Training Materials and Delivery of Capacity Building Activities.	March 2027	25%
4.	Final SOPs and VHT Operations Manual.	April 2027	10%
5.	Final Consultancy Report.	June 2027	30%

Note: Travel expenses for the Consultant(s) are included in the Consultancy Fees. Costs for stakeholder consultations must have prior approval from the PPIU and must follow the PPIU Procurement Policy.

V. REPORTING:

- The Activity will be supervised by the PACER Plus Activity Supervisor in collaboration with the Director of Biosecurity Solomon Islands.
- The Consultant will report regularly to the Activity Supervisor and the Director of Biosecurity Solomon Islands to ensure deliverables are completed according to agreed quality standards and timelines.
- Regular progress meetings with PPIU, Biosecurity Solomon Islands and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock will be held throughout the assignment to review progress, discuss technical issues and agree on solutions where required.

VI. QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED OF CONSULTANT(S)

1. Qualifications

- Tertiary qualification in Post-Harvest Technology, Horticulture, Agricultural Science, Biosecurity, Supply Chain Management, or a related field.

2. Skills & Experience

- Demonstrated experience operating or managing VHT, HTFA or similar phytosanitary treatment systems;
- Experience developing operational procedures, SOPs, and facility management systems;
- Knowledge of international phytosanitary requirements and fresh produce export systems;
- Experience delivering training and capacity-building programmes;
- Experience working with growers, exporters, and regulatory agencies; and
- Demonstrated experience delivering similar assignments in Pacific Island countries or comparable environments.
- Excellent command of English (oral and written);
- Strong facilitation and stakeholder engagement skills;
- Ability to work independently and meet deadlines; and
- Demonstrated commitment to gender equality, disability and social inclusion principles.