

Kia Orana,

Please find attached minor edits to the Agriculture component within the EDS, specifically on page 82 and 86. I note also there is not much about biosecurity and ask if a component could be included either in objective 4 or 5:

Biosecurity and its importance to the Cook Islands

Biosecurity may be defined as the exclusion, eradication or management of exotic pests and diseases (including weeds) that pose a risk to the economy, environment, human health and cultural and social values of the Cook Islands. An effective biosecurity system safeguards Cook Islanders way of life, the nation's unique island environments where people live, farm, fish and explore, the health and wellbeing of communities, future economic diversification for its people, and for maintaining its unique social and cultural values.

The Cook Islands relative freedom from pests and diseases has conferred significant economic, environmental and community benefits. The most obvious example is its largely un-spoilt environment and unique biodiversity which drives a multi-million-dollar tourism sector. A proactive strategic approach to biosecurity is required to preserve the Cook Islands natural environment, its way of life and economic opportunities for future generations. Meeting the challenges that biological threats pose to the prosperity, the Cook Islands national identity and general public wellbeing, will require considered, strategic and inclusive leadership from all participants in the biosecurity, economic and environment sector.

Meitaki