

## FORUM DISCUSSION PAPER

### Purpose and outcomes of the Biosecurity Forum

*February 2014*

#### Recommendation

Participants of the GIA Biosecurity Forum 2014/1 are asked to consider the proposed purpose and outcomes of future Biosecurity Forums. These should be consistent with the intent and provisions of the final Deed and provide appropriate guidance to future participants and the Deed Governance Group, when it is formally constituted, to ensure that Forums contribute to achieving the better biosecurity outcomes of the Deed. Advice is particularly sought on:

- a. The purpose of the Forum and the outcome it seeks to achieve
- b. Proposed priority activities for the Forum through to 2016
- c. Detail on the roles and responsibilities of government and industry within the biosecurity system, additional to that outlined in the Deed
- d. Any other issues.

Potential signatories that are not able to attend the Forum, and potential signatories wishing to provide their feedback in writing, are asked to send any comments to the Secretariat ([secretariat@gia.org.nz](mailto:secretariat@gia.org.nz)) by 19 March 2014.

#### Introduction

The Deed and the revised Biosecurity Act 1993 enable greater engagement by Deed Signatories on the wider biosecurity system to further develop and enhance it (clauses 3.1 of the Deed). This is in addition to Deed provisions enabling joint decision-making and cost-sharing of biosecurity readiness and response activities that better prepare for and effectively respond to biosecurity risks.

Greater engagement in the wider biosecurity system has been of significant interest to industry during Deed development. It is largely perceived as the means for industry to have greater confidence in the efficacy of border biosecurity activities and ensure that their financial liabilities arising from cost sharing of a biosecurity response under the Deed are minimised.

The Deed provides for two Biosecurity Forums per year, or as agreed by the Signatories, and is a vehicle for discussions on the wider biosecurity system.

A clear and agreed purpose and outcomes for the Forum that are consistent with the Deed is needed to ensure that:

- All future forums meet Signatory needs and expectations, and ensure that priority issues are identified and addressed in forum programming.
- Improved biosecurity outcomes across the system are planned and achieved.
- Signatory expectations of their ability to influence the wider biosecurity system are identified and managed.

- A framework is established for performance monitoring, management and reporting relevant to enable Signatories to define and meet accountability obligations.
- The Forum is an effective means for Signatories to discuss and agree the policies and procedures for implementing the Deed.

### ***Purpose of the Biosecurity Forum***

The Deed provides for two Biosecurity Forums per year for discussions by Signatories on the biosecurity system (clause 3.1.1 g of the Deed). While not prescriptive about what will be discussed at each forum, the Deed is clear in expecting all Signatories to work in collaboration with each other and other stakeholders to improve biosecurity outcomes through enhanced engagement across the biosecurity system (described in [Figure 1](#)).

The purpose of the Forum is:

- The vehicle for all Signatories to share information and knowledge of the biosecurity system and participate fully to improve biosecurity outcomes consistent with their roles and responsibilities and rights and obligations under the Deed.
- The means by which all Signatories will work together to enhance the system for all, as opposed to bilateral or multilateral collaboration on organism-specific readiness and response activities that will be achieved through Operational Agreements.

### ***Outcome of the Biosecurity Forum***

The Forum's outcome is:

Signatories and stakeholders identify and agree biosecurity outcomes and activities to improve the wider biosecurity system.

### ***Priority activities 2014 - 16***

The Biosecurity Forum should be used to develop innovative approaches to deliver provisions of the Deed that are common to all Signatories. Taking its lead from the Deed, the priority activities for progression through the Forum to 2016 are:

1. Progressing the development of policies and procedures to implement the Deed.
2. Raising awareness of the benefits of an effective biosecurity system to New Zealand and New Zealanders.
3. Promoting behaviours that reduce the risk of entry and spread of unwanted organisms.
4. Identifying and taking action to address new and emerging biosecurity risks.
5. Sharing information on emerging risks with those potentially affected to enable actions to address the risks identified.
6. Monitoring, measuring and reporting their performance for managing the biosecurity risks that are their responsibility, including those for government and industry outlined in clauses 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 of the Deed, respectively.
7. Sharing a list of key Signatory contacts.

### ***Roles and responsibilities within the wider biosecurity system***

The Deed recognises and acknowledges the effort and investment in the biosecurity system by Signatories and other stakeholders to mitigate the risk of introduction of pests and diseases, and minimise the impact of established organisms on the economy, environment and community. It provides for the different roles and responsibilities of government and industry in biosecurity stating that:

- **Government**, through MPI, will manage the biosecurity risk **created** by the movement of goods, people and vessels across the border and will maintain or establish mechanisms for Signatories to become actively involved in the management of biosecurity risk across the system [clause 3.1.2 of the Deed].
- **Industry** Signatories will actively engage with their members and MPI to manage the biosecurity risks that **result** from the movement of goods, people and vessels across the border, and to mitigate the potential impacts of those risks [clause 3.1.3 of the Deed].

Figure 1 describes the wider biosecurity system, and industries' and government's role in it. It was first introduced to GIA stakeholders in the February 2011 MAF/Biosecurity NZ publication titled "Government Industry Agreement Model Design In Brief". It has been modified to include detail of commitments in the final Deed.

The government's role is reflected in the MPI Statement of Intent 2013 – 2018 (<http://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-resources/publications.aspx?title=Statement%20of%20Intent>) long term outcome of protecting New Zealand from biological risk. A medium term outcome is that NZ is protected from biological risks through the effective operation of the biosecurity and food safety systems. A number of the key deliverables over the next five years outlined on page 18 of the Statement align with Deed outcomes and reference working with industry.

## **Background**

With the Deed now finalised and a number of Biosecurity Forums proposed for 2014, it is critical that the purpose and outcomes of the Biosecurity Forum – as a primary means of engaging on the wider biosecurity system, are agreed by potential Deed Signatories. This will ensure that all participants have a common understanding of the biosecurity system, the roles and responsibilities of participants in that system, and actions of Signatories and stakeholders in the system to improve the biosecurity outcomes it achieves.

The IGB has agreed that the Forum will remain open to potential Signatories for an extended period to allow industry organisations the time needed to achieve a mandate from their members to sign the Deed.

In addition, the operating model for the Deed Governance Group is proposing that stakeholders that are integral to the biosecurity system but would not be eligible to sign the Deed (for example; Federated Farmers, HortNZ; research organisations, regional councils) are allowed to participate in Forums, on the grounds that, to be effective, the system must be inclusive, and cannot be limited to Deed Signatories. It is proposed that these stakeholders are afforded an associate member status that would allow this.

**Figure 1: NZ's Biosecurity System: an interpretation based on current actions and GIA Deed commitments**

