

Guidelines for the NPBDN Diagnostic Residential Program

Program purpose

The purpose of the National Plant Biosecurity Diagnostic Network (NPBDN) Diagnostic Residential Program (referred to as Diagnostic Residentials) is to improve the national plant biosecurity diagnostic capability and capacity by developing the skills of individuals. It allows plant biosecurity diagnosticians to gain essential skills and knowledge through experiences they would not otherwise have access to in their own laboratory. The program also allows participants to share their ideas, build networks and leads to collaborations between laboratories. The program forms an integral component of the professional development framework for the NPBDN.

Overview & examples

Diagnostic Residentials involve plant biosecurity diagnostician(s) spending time in another laboratory, workplace, or by participating in relevant activities that improve the national capability to identify plant pests.

Examples of previous project formats include:

- Drafting a National Diagnostic Protocol after visiting a laboratory with expertise in the target pest(s)
- Learning new techniques or gaining exposure to laboratory accreditation by visiting laboratories where the technique or practices are currently implemented
- Improving diagnostic skills by working with a pest expert in another Australian diagnostic laboratory
- Arranging for an expert to come to your laboratory and run workshops on specific identification skills or techniques not currently held within the laboratory
- Participating in a surveillance program to gain field experience and/or provide advice on sampling methods to improve diagnostic outcomes
- Visiting a laboratory overseas to get direct experience with significant plant pests¹.

These are just a few examples and applicants are encouraged to think outside the box when designing their Diagnostic Residential Project. Projects should show benefit to NPBDN and address a known diagnostic gap or improve identification capability for one of the following.

1. A National Priority Plant Pest (NPPP). List available at [agriculture.gov.au/pests-diseases-weeds/plant/national-priority-plant-pests-2019](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/pests-diseases-weeds/plant/national-priority-plant-pests-2019).
2. A plant pest on the Priority list of exotic environmental pests and diseases. Information available at [agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/environmental/priority-list](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/environmental/priority-list).
3. A High Priority Pest of plant industries. These are listed in Biosecurity Plans for industries. <https://www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/industries/>.
4. An emerging plant pest.

The length of each Diagnostic Residential varies depending on the activities and the specified outcomes. Typically, past residentials have been 5-14 days long. After the project is carried out, recipients must meet their reporting requirements, present their project at an Annual Diagnosticians' Workshop and train at least two people in their home laboratory or organisation on the skills learned.

¹ Check travel restrictions relating to COVID-19 before submitting a project with international travel

Eligibility

Only NPBDN members² currently employed in a plant health laboratory or organisation in Australia or New Zealand are eligible for the program.

Applications

Diagnostic Residential Project applications should clearly address each field in the application form, including endorsement from the applicant's line manager and the manager of the host laboratory/organisation. The application form is available to download the NPBDN members portal (portal.plantbiosecuritydiagnostics.net.au/development-events/). Completed forms should be submitted to the NPBDN Coordinator (NPBDN@phau.com.au).

Application assessment

All applications will be assessed by the Network Implementation Working Group, under the Subcommittee on Plant Health Diagnostics (SPHD), based on the following criteria.

The project demonstrates:

1. Benefits to national plant biosecurity diagnostics and the NPBDN, through building diagnostic capability and/or capacity
2. Benefits to the applicant and host laboratories/organisations
3. Clear and valuable outcomes and outputs
4. Means to disseminate outcomes and outputs to the applicant's organisation and the wider NPBDN.
5. Value for money.

Projects that contribute to the development, review or validation of a National Diagnostic Protocol³ will be favoured.

Guide to budget

Diagnostic Residentials are commonly in the range of \$3,000 to \$10,000. Applicants may propose budgets outside this range if value for money can be demonstrated.

The program encourages a collaborative approach between participating agencies. Diagnostic Residentials can cover the costs of travel, accommodation, bench fees (if applicable) and some consumables. In kind support from participating organisations is expected, and can include wages, registration fees (for associated conferences and workshops) and some consumables.

Acknowledgement of funding

Funding for this program is provided by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment under the Plant Biosecurity and Response Reform programme.

Contact

If you would like further information, support with identifying host laboratories or workplaces, or support with the application process, please contact the NPBDN Coordinator at NPBDN@phau.com.au or (02) 6215 7700.

You may also wish to talk with your local SPHD member, the list of members can be found at plantbiosecuritydiagnostics.net.au/work/#committee or by contacting the SPHD secretariat (SPHD@agriculture.gov.au).

² To join the NPBDN visit portal.plantbiosecuritydiagnostics.net.au/join

³ Endorsed NDPs are available in the Resources section of the NPBDN website.