



Pacific Invasives Initiative

Strategic Plan 2010 - 2015



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Current situation on the invasive species issue in the Pacific region

The size and complexity of the invasive species threat is a major challenge for Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) and currently there is a shortage of capacity to address this. This is identified as a regional issue in the *Guidelines for Invasive Species Management in the Pacific (Guidelines)*¹ which were endorsed by both SPREP and SPC member countries in 2008 and published in 2009. This issue is also identified in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAP) of many Pacific island countries. This is further emphasised in the National Invasive Species Action Plans that have been developed to date.

Invasive species management is complex and inter-disciplinary with new knowledge and skills constantly being developed from both research and practice. This is necessary to meet the new threats that are constantly appearing as a result of increasing tourism and trade. Examples of this include the recently reported spread of termites in Fiji, the small Indian mongoose in Samoa and very recently in New Caledonia and the ever increasing invasion of the little fire ant across the Pacific.

A further challenge in responding to invasive species threats is the cross-sectoral nature of the problem: some sectoral activities provide pathways for the arrival of invasive species pathways, the negative impacts are felt across multiple sectors. Fostering cooperation on invasive species management between relevant sectors is essential not only to integrate sectoral inputs but also to ensure an effective approach to this issue. For example, major benefits could be gained from leveraging knowledge and skills within sectors such as agriculture and forestry, which have a long history of managing pests and diseases in PICTs, and using these to augment the capacity of the environment sector. Also, broadening the perspective of production and economic sectors beyond pests and diseases that affect not only their immediate interests but also the environment will enhance PICTs defences against invasive species threats and maintain resilient ecosystems.

The struggle PICTs face in managing invasive species is resulting in wide ranging economic and environmental impacts. Invasive species are the major driver of change in biodiversity and ecosystems on islands². Although the economic costs of invasive species to Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are not available, it is safe to assume that these are very high, based on available information from developed island countries. For example, in New Zealand, the economic cost of invasive species in 2008 was estimated at NZ\$3.4 billion, representing almost 2% of GDP³. The cost of invasive species to the global economy was estimated to be more than US\$1.4 trillion per year⁴.

The presence of invasive species, such as fruit flies, can result in trade restrictions in agricultural commodities and hinder PICTs' access to export markets. This can result in

¹ Guidelines for Invasive Species Management in the Pacific: a Pacific Strategy for managing pests, weeds and other invasive species, Alan Tye, SPREP, 2009 (http://www.sprep.org/att/publication/000699_RISSFinalLR.pdf).

² The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Synthesis Report, 2005

³ The New Zealand Institute: <http://www.nzinstitute.org/>

⁴ Pimentel D., S. McNair, J. Janecka, J. Wightman, C. Simmonds, C. O'Connell, E. Wong, L. Russel, J. Zern, T. Aquino and T. Tsomondo, 2001: Economic and environmental threats of alien plant, animal, and microbe invasions. *Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment* 84: 1–20.

economic and livelihood losses. Increased trade, transport and travel can lead to increased risk of new invasive species introductions which may further hinder access to export markets. Healthy and intact natural ecosystems, both terrestrial and marine, are the backbone of the tourism industry in the Pacific which is the largest and fastest growing economic sector with a 50% growth rate over the past five years⁵. The attraction of high levels of native biodiversity adds value to the attraction of sandy, sunny beaches and exotic locations and there is a fast growing interest in developing ecotourism businesses throughout the region.

Evidence is mounting that the detrimental effects of invasive species will increase in the presence of climate change⁶. Pacific island nations are already experiencing the effects of a changing climate. Cyclones and severe flooding have hit Yap, Niue and Fiji recently. Air temperature, the number of cyclones and sea level are all predicted to rise, and changes in rainfall are also predicted across the Pacific⁷.

The combined effects of invasive species and climate change could be devastating for some native plants and animals as well as for food security, international trade and other economic activities in the Pacific. There is already evidence of such effects in the region. Invasive plants often smother gardens, farmland and forests following damage caused by extreme storms.

PII believes that by working together with partner agencies that are committed to take a leadership role on invasive species management, we can contribute positively to developing Pacific capacity to effectively plan for, manage and control invasive species in the region.

History of PII

Invasive species are the most significant threat to island ecosystems and the people who depend on them for their livelihoods. In the Pacific, the shortage of trained personnel and limited access to the required information, processes and tools are major problems in the management of their impacts⁸. To effectively protect Pacific Island ecosystems there is a widespread need to develop greater capacity in invasive species management in the region.

The Cooperative Initiative on Invasive Alien Species on Islands (CII)⁹ was launched by the New Zealand Government and the Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) at the CBD's 6th Conference of the Parties. CII was then endorsed as a Type II Partnership at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

The creation of CII was in direct response to a proposal from Small Island Developing States and Countries with Islands (including the Pacific) calling for increased cooperation and

⁵ ESCAP/DESA Pacific High Level Dialogue for the Five-Year Review of the Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of SIDS (MSI+5), 8-9 February 2010, Port Vila, Vanuatu. Draft Report.

⁶ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity 2009: Connecting Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation: Report of the 2nd Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change. *Technical Series No. 41*.

⁷ IPCC (2001). Climate change 2001: Impacts, adaptations and vulnerability. Chapter 17. Small island states. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

⁸ Guidelines for Invasive Species Management in the Pacific: a Pacific Strategy for managing pests, weeds and other invasive species, Alan Tye, SPREP, 2009 (http://www.sprep.org/att/publication/000699_RISSFinalLR.pdf).

⁹ COP 6 Decision VI/23 - 19. Endorses the international cooperative initiative on invasive alien species on islands, developed by the Government of the New Zealand, the Invasive Species Specialist Group, and the Global Invasive Species Programme, and calls on the Global Environment Facility, Parties, Governments and relevant organizations to support and participate in these initiatives.

coordination on invasive species management on islands. CII was established with seed funding from the New Zealand Government and the Pacific Development and Conservation Trust based in New Zealand.

PII was established as the first regional programme of the CII in 2004 and was the first formal invasive species partnership in the Pacific. Based at The University of Auckland, PII is a multi-disciplinary team of invasive species specialists. It works extensively with Pacific agencies and leverages expertise from universities, government agencies, such as DOC and MAF Biosecurity and commercial companies in New Zealand as well as assistance from members of the Pacific Invasives Partnership (PIP).

PII was actively involved in the development of the Pacific Ant Prevention Programme (PAPP), Pacific Invasives Learning Network (PILN) and PIP. PIP is the lead group responsible for coordinating, developing and tracking regional efforts to help advance invasive species management in Pacific Island Countries and Territories.

To date, PII has received strong support from New Zealand Government's International Aid and Development Agency (NZAID), The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF). PII believes that its work is relevant to many sectors and donors and is confident that it will continue to attract interest which will result in continued support.

Our Vision – 25 Years

The natural heritage and peoples of Pacific Island Countries and Territories are protected from the threats of Invasive Species by Pacific people.

Core Values/Principles

When working for or through PII, all staff and consultants will be accountable for and be conscious of the following:

- We **facilitate** the development of long-term capacity for invasive species management, but the people, organisations and agencies we work with are responsible for their own projects and processes
- We aim to form **long-term relationships based on trust and mutual respect**
- We **respect the people and cultures** of Pacific Island Countries and Territories
- We aim to **empower partners' confidence and encourage self reliance**
- Our approach to **invasive species management is based on established best practice**
- We will **do no harm** to people or the environment
- We value **mutual learning** and understanding
- We **reflect on our own practice and learn from it**
- Our **work is aligned with Guidelines for Invasive Species Management in the Pacific** and national priorities
- We are **responsive, flexible and adaptable**

Our Mission

To strengthen the capacity of Pacific Island Countries and Territories to effectively manage invasive species threats.

How PII Works

PII works with agencies to develop or participate in programmes, projects or activities that contribute to achieving our Mission. Our capacity development work is guided by the principles and strategies set out in PII's Capacity Development Strategy.

PII uses the following criteria to prioritise its work:

- Provides potential for long-term involvement in invasive species management
- Provides potential for awareness raising of invasive species issues in the region
- Invasive species management activities are aligned with regional or national priorities

The agencies PII works with are:

- Willing to further develop their invasive species management capacity
- Willing and keen to work with PII
- Committed to following established invasive species management best practice for planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation
- Willing to take a leadership role on invasive species management
- Willing to help others learn from them
- Have an established management structure and systems
- Have an established relationship with the local community or a clear strategy for working with them.

Areas of Strategic Focus

Six strategies will guide PII's work towards achieving its mission:

1. Development of Pacific capacity for managing invasive species
2. Provision of practical training in invasive species management
3. Provision of invasive species management best practice tools
4. Provision of technical support and advice on invasive species management
5. Development and strengthening of linkages and networks
6. Strengthen PII as a centre of excellence for invasive species capacity development

Strategies

1. Development of Pacific capacity for managing invasive species

PII believes that it is crucial for PICTs to take a leadership role on the invasive species issue and develop and maintain a critical mass of expertise to support their invasive species management work. PII will continue to work with Pacific agencies, especially key decision makers and their staff within these agencies, to enhance their capacity for managing invasive species by:

- Building trusting relationships
- Enhancing their understanding of the environmental and socio-economic impacts of invasive species and generating support for their management
- Providing technical support and advice
- Providing practical training based around the knowledge and skills required for managing invasive species
- Providing guidance and tools

2. Provision of practical training in invasive species management

PII will continue to develop and deliver high quality training on topics such as Island Biosecurity, Invasive Plant Project Management and Rodent and Cat eradication. Training will provide participants with:

- Up to date, relevant and accessible information about the theoretical concepts underpinning sound invasive species management including
 - Access to relevant literature and research findings
 - Links to experts and peers
- Processes and skills to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate invasive species management projects
- Communication opportunities and skills
- Networking
- Opportunities to observe and practice skills through participation in invasive species management activities

3. Provision of invasive species management best practice tools

PII promotes and encourages the development of best practice by:

- Identifying, collecting, developing and disseminating accessible and useful best practice tools for both technical and social components of invasive species management
- Providing assistance with invasive species management project planning
- Facilitating invasive species management project reviews to enhance learning
- Assist with identifying invasive species management research needs and promoting these to research institutions.

4. Provision of technical support and advice for invasive species management

4.1. Provision of information

PII provides high quality, relevant and timely information on invasive species management by:

- Responding to requests for support and advice
- Providing technical references and information
- Producing of up to date, accessible, useful resource materials
- One-to-one advice and mentoring

- Maintaining an up-to-date website
- Producing a quarterly newsletter
- Improving the flow of information on invasive species management throughout the Pacific at national, regional and international levels

4.2 Develop mechanisms and processes for ongoing support and advice for invasive species management

PII ensures agencies in the region have access to support and advice on invasive species management by:

- Continuing to develop a pool of local and international advisors to support invasive species management
- Facilitating access to expertise and resources, especially to New Zealand agencies

5. Development and strengthening of linkages and networks

PII will continue to develop high quality, responsive relationships across sectors that enable the development of Pacific capacity for managing invasive species by:

- Building, strengthening and maintaining relationships with partners
- Promoting and contributing to the strength of the Pacific Invasives Partnership (PIP) as the regional coordinating body for invasive species
- Continuing to be an active member of PIP
- Participating in and contributing positively to national, regional and international meetings and conferences
- Working closely with other Pacific regional organisations (e.g. SPREP, SPC and PILN).
- Promoting multi-sectoral engagement involving civil society, national, regional and international agencies to address invasive species management issues
- Developing Pacific capacity for managing invasive species to ensure sustainability

6. Strengthen PII as a centre of excellence for invasive species capacity development

PII will continue to develop as an internationally recognised centre of excellence for invasive species management capacity development by:

- Being responsive and relevant to Pacific needs
- Developing a strong, efficient organisational base in New Zealand and the Pacific.
- Ensuring PII is appropriately structured, adequately resourced and managed to implement this strategic plan.
- Focusing on recruiting staff from the region
- Developing an annual work plan
- Developing a comprehensive and diverse long term funding strategy and multi-year budgets
- Developing a marketing and communication plan