

HELPING ISLANDS ADAPT:

A Workshop on Regional Action to Combat Invasive
Species

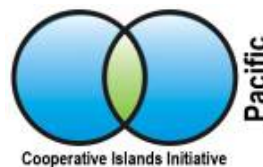
on Islands to Preserve Biodiversity and Adapt to Climate
Change

12-16 April 2010, Auckland, New Zealand



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Organised and co-sponsored by:



Australian Government
Director of National Parks



GLOBAL ISLAND PARTNERSHIP



Helping Islands Adapt

A workshop on regional action to combat invasive species on islands to preserve biodiversity and adapt to climate change

Purpose:

To identify and strengthen networks and structures that enable effective and sustainable invasive species management* for islands.

* Management is inclusive of prevention and incursion response.

Outcomes:

- 1) Lessons from regional collaboration and coordination in the Pacific and other island regions showcased.
- 2) List of actions prepared to strengthen invasive species management in regions, building on existing regional strategies and other guidance.
- 3) Networks and resources necessary identified to support implementation of the actions.
- 4) Key steps identified to catalyse support at the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP10) for the implementation of the actions.

Objectives:

- 1) To offer all countries or regions managing the conservation of island lands and waters, the opportunity to share lessons learnt from establishing and collaborating over island invasive species programmes. Particular emphasis will be on the operation of the Pacific Invasives Initiative including its networks and partnerships with Pacific governments, regional organisations and other players.
- 2) To consider replicating or adapting existing models and determining elements for use in governance arrangements in other countries or regions.
- 3) To share experiences from other regions that may be relevant to the Pacific.

Scope:

- 1) Participants develop a clear understanding of the Pacific Invasives Initiative's main features, methodology, strengths and weaknesses, including its relationships and networks with other regional bodies and initiatives.
- 2) Participants identify priorities and next steps in their own regions and countries, drawing on the lessons presented and their own experiences with their regional co-ordination.
- 3) Participants, including Pacific Invasives Initiative staff, have an opportunity to interact with the wider global donor community and other institutions and agencies on possible support initiatives.
- 4) The Workshop excludes technical discussion of invasive species control techniques in the field.

SUMMARY

There are important and complex connections between biodiversity and climate change. While biodiversity around the world is clearly threatened by the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, flooding and species migration, islands, by nature of their small size and isolation, are inherently more sensitive to such impacts and can be limited in their options or capacity to adapt.

However, not only is biodiversity threatened by climate change impacts. There is increasing evidence that biodiversity can play an important role in both mitigating and adapting to such impacts. Healthy ecosystems, high in biodiversity have proven to foster increased resilience to the impacts of climate change in many cases; for example:

- maintaining or restoring wetlands and estuaries can help protect against flooding and promotes biodiversity;
- preserving dunes as natural dikes can help delay seawater from inundating coastal areas and supplies sand to replenish eroded areas; and
- protecting or restoring forests can reduce flood damage and erosion from more frequent and severe storms while preserving access to clean water and food.

One of the most successful ways to protect biodiversity and the integrity of ecosystems is through invasive species management. Indeed, invasive species are one of the greatest threats to biodiversity globally. The estimated damage from invasive species worldwide totals more than \$1.4 trillion USD annually¹ – five percent of the global economy. As such, protection of biodiversity through managing invasive species represents a cost-efficient form of ecosystem based adaptation to climate change, and one with significant additional benefits in terms of food security, international trade, public health, tourism, and other economic activities. Left unaddressed, invasive species and climate change could become compounding drivers of biodiversity loss, placing ecosystems, agriculture and even public health under increasing threat. Increased frequency and duration of pest and disease outbreaks, changes in fire regimes and alterations in local hydrology due to changes in species composition are a few of the patterns that are starting to emerge.

Islands are also particularly sensitive to invasive species and the resulting loss of biodiversity. However, the same characteristics of islands which make them so vulnerable also make islands the most effective places to address the threats posed by invasive species. Islands have been home to some of the most successful eradication programs worldwide and frequently serve as a “testing ground” for innovative and collaborative approaches to invasive species management.

¹ Pimentel et al, 2001. Economic and environmental threats of alien plant, animal, and microbe invasions. *Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment* 84: 1-20

To examine these approaches, and share lessons learned for the benefit of all island regions, the New Zealand Government will host a targeted global workshop on Invasive Alien Species Management on Islands to:

- showcase lessons learned from regional collaboration across the Pacific and other major island regions,
- demonstrate how invasive species management can act as a cost-efficient form of ecosystem based adaptation to climate change;
- identify common elements for successful invasive species engagement across regions, and consider options to address barriers to regional coordination, and
- identify next steps to increase and strengthen regional and global collaboration to address the critical threat posed by biodiversity loss as a result of invasive species



Training in the field on Viwa Island, Fiji. © Karen Johns

The workshop, scheduled for 12-16 April 2010 in Auckland, New Zealand, is designed to help strengthen and mobilize capacity on islands across the globe to address the threats posed by invasive species. It is also intended to help garner more widespread donor and political support for these efforts, as well as to place invasive species management squarely at the centre of the broader international discourse on biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation. The primary focus will be on institutional relations and collaboration among key stakeholders. Discussions will cover the intersection of a range of sectors (agriculture, environment, natural resource management) and ecosystems (terrestrial, marine, inland waters), but will not concentrate on site-based management and control issues.

The workshop is currently being developed through a partnership between the NZ Government, the Australian Government, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII), the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) and the Global Invasive Species Program (GISP) and was specifically welcomed in the most recent CBD decisions on invasive alien species and the Island Biodiversity Programme of Work. In 2009, the workshop was highlighted at the United Nation's Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in New York in May, and the Pacific Island Roundtable for Nature Conservation in July. An expected workshop outcome is to identify options for major progress on invasive species as it relates to island biodiversity and climate change

adaptation issues at the CBD's 10th Conference of the Parties (COP10) in Japan in October 2010.

The steering committee is currently seeking input on key participants; cosponsors for the meeting; and feedback to optimise the workshop's impact by catalysing collaboration and leadership in island regions.

BACKGROUND

In 2002, following calls from countries with islands for more effective efforts to manage invasive species threats to island biodiversity, New Zealand helped develop the Cooperative Initiative on Invasive Alien Species on Islands (CII), launched at the CBD's 6th Conference of Parties and at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).



Tricolor heron chick being attacked by fire ant workers.
© Bart Drees, Texas Fire Ant Applied Research and Education Program.

The CII was first implemented in the Pacific region to advance priorities identified by the Pacific island countries in their regional invasives strategy. This NZAID funded activity became known as the Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII), a pilot regional programme for the CII. In 2008, the PII partners united with the Pacific Invasive Learning Network partners and the Invasive Species

Working Group of the Roundtable for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands to form the Pacific Invasives Partnership (PIP). Together these initiatives link the major regional intergovernmental organizations and provide strategic support for demonstration projects, skill sharing, training, networking and strategy development across the Pacific region.

With the proven success of these efforts in the Pacific, it was envisaged that the CII would expand to other island regions in partnership with other organisations, governments and donors. At several international meetings, numerous island nations and nations with islands expressed interest in a global workshop to learn from the Pacific's and other regional experiences, build intra and inter regional capacity, and develop regional donor support for this work. In particular, countries and initiatives in the Caribbean, Europe/Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean and the Coral Triangle are increasing activity on invasive species and are discussing greater collaboration. This workshop can bring key island leaders together to share ways to capitalize on this energy, maximize regional results, ensure that adaptation to climate change includes the maintenance of healthy ecosystems, and harness the support of relevant international processes and partners.

PROGRAMME

Potential Workshop Presentations & Discussions include:

- Regional overviews – descriptions of the regional frameworks for agencies and initiatives addressing invasive species, including relevant actors, their different roles and experiences with multi-agency approaches at national, regional and international levels
 - The Pacific – presentations of key Pacific initiatives under the PIP – structure, modus operandi, work programme (past, present, future), and features with potential application to participating regions/countries.
 - Experiences and lessons learned from the Caribbean, Europe, the Indian Ocean and the Coral Triangle.
- Identification of key elements of effective models by considering and adapting elements of existing regional models and other lessons learned (breakout groups by region).
- Future support for new CII initiatives – discussion of domestic and international leadership, sources of support and next steps, including potential high-level political champions for each region.
- Creating a global constituency for invasives on islands, enabling domestic and international leadership, identifying high level champions and focussing on the strategic opportunities (such as COP 10) to increase resources and support for addressing invasives issues on islands.

WORKSHOP SIZE AND PARTICIPATION

To ensure the workshop is a "hands-on" learning experience with tangible outcomes for all attendees, participation will be focused on regions with demonstrated interest in increasing collaborative action on their invasive species challenges (including the Caribbean, Europe/Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, Coral Triangle and the Pacific). Resource people from other regions, countries and/or organizations with expertise in this area will also be involved. Participation will be by invitation, and will number approximately 60.

The limited size of the workshop means that preference will be given to supporting national, regional or international agencies; potential donors who have expressed a desire to implement the CII in their regions of interest; and parties well-placed to catalyse leadership in global biodiversity and climate change processes. The Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) and the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP) will also be important partners to facilitate information and follow-up for the workshop.

VENUE, DATES AND DURATION

The workshop is scheduled to take place in Auckland from 12 – 16 April 2010. It will be a maximum of five working days in duration, with time allocated for both formal and informal discussions. It is anticipated that this timing will

allow participants to consolidate lessons in their own regions, potential actions to progress invasive species governance and management within and between regions, before engaging in related international processes, including preparations for COP10.

SPONSORS

The workshop is being co-sponsored by New Zealand, Australia, TNC and GLISPA. While there is limited funding available to support some participants, those able to fund their own attendance will be encouraged to do so. The Steering Committee is also reaching out to potential co-sponsors to support workshop participants requiring financial assistance. In this way, it is hoped that key participants from a range of regions and backgrounds can benefit from the lessons learned from other island regions, and that intra, and inter regional partnerships will be strengthened to stimulate effective invasives management at home.

Further information regarding the workshop programme, participation list and travel to New Zealand can be found on: <http://www.cbd.int/invasive/>

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