



Soundbites



December 2019

The electronic newsletter of the Pacific Invasives Learning Network (PILN) – reporting on Invasives news from PILN teams and the Pacific region. Past issues are available online: <http://www.sprep.org/piln>

Season’s Greetings Invasive Species Battlers,

What a year!!

It is with great pleasure that I send out the Soundbites for the year of 2019.

The past year has had a strong focus on planning for the next five years and beyond. Establishing formal systems, processes and partnerships to scale up on the ground invasive species management activities in the Pacific is compulsory if we are ever to address the issue properly. Not only is it essential to provide confidence and enthusiasm to donors, but to physically deliver activities on this scale requires more than a “business as usual” approach.

Significant steps forward this year include the development of the Pacific Regional Invasive Species Management Support Service (PRISMSS), the PRISMSS Programme Management Course and the start-up of several large projects.

To celebrate the Battlers in 2019, this issue announces the Pacific region’s 3rd “Pacific Invasive Species Battler of the Year”.

Exciting news is that we will be having a PILN Meeting again next year, a chance to hang out, share laughs and experiences and learn a thing or two while we are at it.

Please take some time to relax with your families and friends over the Christmas and New Year break, those people who are close to us whom often compete for our time during the busy year. It is these people that ultimately keep us going in our never-ending pursuit.

Thank you all again for a fantastic year, now let’s raise our glass and celebrate.

Manuia le Kerisimasi

David Moverley
SPREP Invasive Species Adviser



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2019 “PACIFIC INVASIVE SPECIES BATTLER OF THE YEAR”

In the Pacific we are lucky to have so many dedicated Invasive Species Battler’s. Those that work hard and achieve real outcomes for the benefit of their community, country, territory or state and the Pacific region as a whole. The “Pacific Invasive Species Battler of the Year Award” aims to recognise these outstanding people and the contribution they make. This year is the third time this award is presented.

FRANCIS LIYEG

2019 PACIFIC INVASIVE SPECIES BATTLER OF THE YEAR

Yap Department of Agriculture, Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia.



Francis Liyeg is a Battler on a mission. For well over a decade Francis has been working on eradicating imperata grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) and chain of love (*Antigonon leptopus*) from the State of Yap.

In 2019 Francis could declare that the war against these two weeds was over, they have been eradicated from the State of Yap. Constant vigilance and persistence have enabled Francis to reach these milestones, along with hard work and good management of his team.

Well done Francis and his team in stopping these weeds from impacting their forests, coastal environment and communities.

*Saving Yap State’s biodiversity one day at a time.
Love your work Francis.*

Past Recipients:

2018: Tavita Togia, NPS, American Samoa

2107: Lisa Fanua, VEPA, Tonga.



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SAVE THE DATE - PILN MEETING - 10-14 AUGUST 2020

Yes, it's true, we are holding the 5th Pacific Invasive Learning Network Meeting next year.

Due to the short preparation time we are planning to hold it again in Samoa as we did in 2016.

More information will be available early next year, please ensure your country/territory/state PILN Team lists are updated with [Josef Pisi](#) as soon as possible.

Completion of Regional Guidelines Database Questionnaires for 2019 will be a pre-requisite for attendance.



Participants at the 4th PILN Meeting in Samoa, 2016.

SAVE THE DATE – 10TH PACIFIC ISLANDS CONFERENCE ON NATURE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTED AREAS- 19-24 APRIL 2020

“*Nature Conservation action for a resilient Pacific*” is the theme for this conference and invasive species management is one of the greatest actions that can contribute to resilience.

We are planning for a solid stream of invasive species focused activity during the conference in Noumea, New Caledonia.

There are opportunities to exhibit or sponsor, be a speaker, nominate colleagues for environmental awards or just make the most of the educational opportunities and networking.

Please visit the website to engage in any of these activities.

www.pacificnatureconference.com/

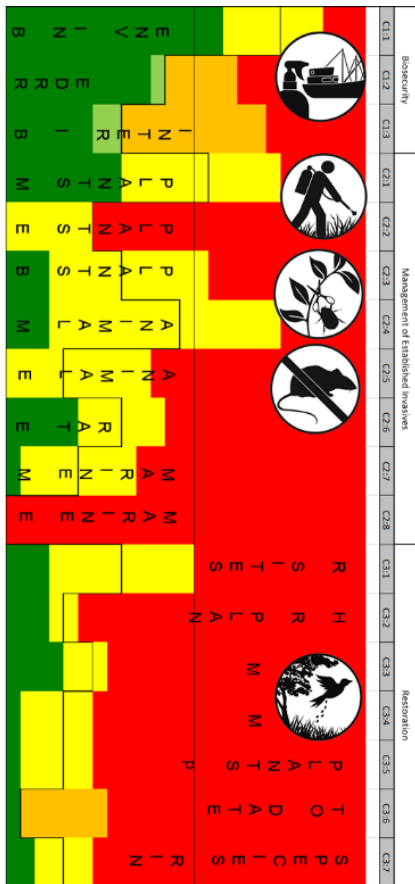


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PACIFIC REGIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE (PRISMSS)
LAUNCHED

One of the best pieces of news for the Pacific has been the formal creation and the launch of the PRISMSS in 2019.

The PRISMSS is designed to increase invasive species management on the ground throughout the Pacific by streamlining services and targeting funding to achieve this through five Regional Programmes.



- Protect Our Islands**
National and inter-island biosecurity and EDRR
- War on Weeds**
Management of High Priority Weeds
- Natural Enemies-Natural Solutions**
Biological control of widespread weeds
- Predator Free Pacific**
Removal of mammalian predators from islands
- Resilient Ecosystems-Resilient Communities**
Priority area ecological restoration

The regional programmes were selected from the 2017 regional gap analysis (see later section) and the focal areas have good successful Pacific examples, consistent Pacific technical leads and are ready to be scaled up across the Pacific.

Key activities for the PRISMSS in 2019 were:

- Delivery of the PRISMSS PMC (next section)
- Support to Tokelau for the management of Singapore Daisy
- Project Development

Further information can be found on the webpage

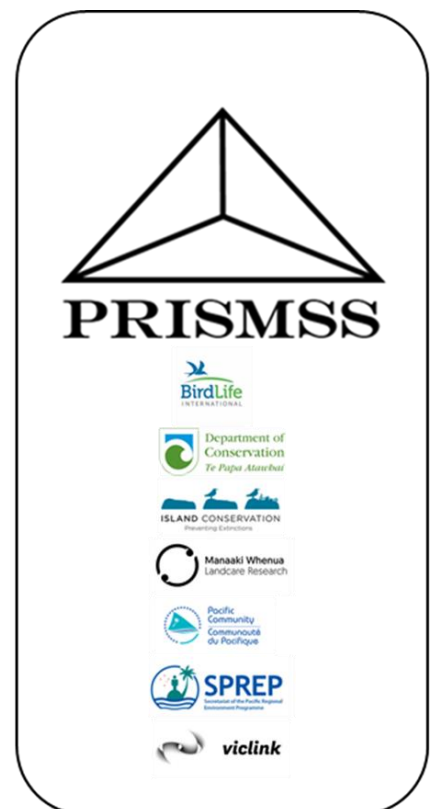
www.sprep.org/prismss



The PRISMSS is coordinated by Josef Pisi of the SPREP Invasive Species Team.

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Requests to PRISMSS can be emailed to PRISMSS@sprep.org



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PRISMSS INVASIVE SPECIES PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT COURSE

22 OCTOBER – 22 NOVEMBER 2019

The PRISMSS Invasive Species Programme Management Course (PMC) was a success for the 22 Participants attending from across the Pacific region. Over 80% of participants committed to the entire five weeks of themed programmes. The PMC taught invasive species management principles but its greatest strength was to provide step by step planning to sustain a comprehensive multiyear programme to coordinate and integrate invasive species management across the regional programmes at a national, territorial or state level.

Each PICT created summative planning charts to coordinate, sequence and operationalise management actions and then presented the plan as a proposal for future funders that should clear thinking about how targeted action could be carried out with timeframes for priority sites and species. The event not only allowed coordinators to plan from their domestic perspectives but also allowed each PRISMSS partner to effectively schedule actions in the Pacific region over the next 5 years according to the readiness of each country or territory.



PRISMSS “Graduation Day”, 22nd November 2019, Apia, Samoa.



The PRISMSS PMC was coordinated and facilitated by Shannan Mortimer who is on secondment from the New Zealand Department of Conservation (a PRISMSS Partner) as a Capability Builder for the PRISMSS within the SPREP Invasive Species Team.

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GEF 6 “STRENGTHENING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CAPACITIES TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES ON GLOBALLY SIGNIFICANT BIODIVERSITY IN THE PACIFIC” UPDATE

After many years of development, the GEF6 Regional Invasives Project commenced officially on the 1st of May 2019. Participating countries are Niue, Marshall Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. A significant regional component focuses on establishing the PRISMSS, reviewing the Pacific Guidelines, sustainable financing and improving resource delivery and regional monitoring. The project will be heavily assisted by the PRISMSS with each country having activities within each of the PRISMSS Regional Programmes.

Significant milestones for 2019 were:

- Recruiting Project staff
- Establishing project agreements.
- Inaugural Project Steering Committee meeting on the 14th of November.
- Project Inception held on the 21st of October.
- The PRISMSS Programme Management Course (PMC) from the 21 October to the 22 of November.

In 2020 the project activities will commence in the participating countries. Many of the activities are within the 5 regional programmatic themes and will be supported by the PRISMSS partners.



Members attending the Inaugural GEF 6 RIP Project Steering Committee Meeting, 14th November 2019, Apia, Samoa.



The GEF 6 Regional Invasives Project (GEF6 RIP) is managed by Bradley Myer of the SPREP Invasive Species Team.

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EDF11 OCT “PROTEGE” PROJECT UPDATE

PROTEGE started on the 26th of October 2018 and is an integrated project with 4 components (Agriculture & Forestry, Fisheries, Water and Invasive Species) implemented by SPC and SPREP through funding from the 11th European Development Fund aiming to build climate change resilient economies in the French Overseas Territories (French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna) and Pitcairn through biodiversity and renewable natural resources.

The Invasive Species Component, implemented by SPREP, will aim to protect and restore ecosystem services by managing or eradicating (where possible) invasive species. To this end, agreements between SPREP and each of the territory governments have been signed. On the ground implementation is expected to start in 2020 and continue through to 2022.



Initial site investigations in Wallis, note the seabird iguano a sign of good ecosystem function.



The Invasive Species Result Area of the PROTEGE project is coordinated by Dominic Sadler of the SPREP Invasive Species Team.

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GEF GLOFOULING PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT UPDATE

The introduction and establishment of invasive aquatic species is one of the greatest threats to the world's freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems. One of the main vectors for unintentional transfer of non-indigenous species is through marine biofouling. Biofouling is the build-up of aquatic organisms on a ship's underwater hull and other man-made structures such as aquaculture farms and coastal infrastructure. To address the issue, the [GloFouling Partnerships](#) project is working with SPREP and pioneering countries in the region, such as Fiji and Tonga, to implement the [IMO Biofouling Guidelines](#) and best practices for non-ship based industries.

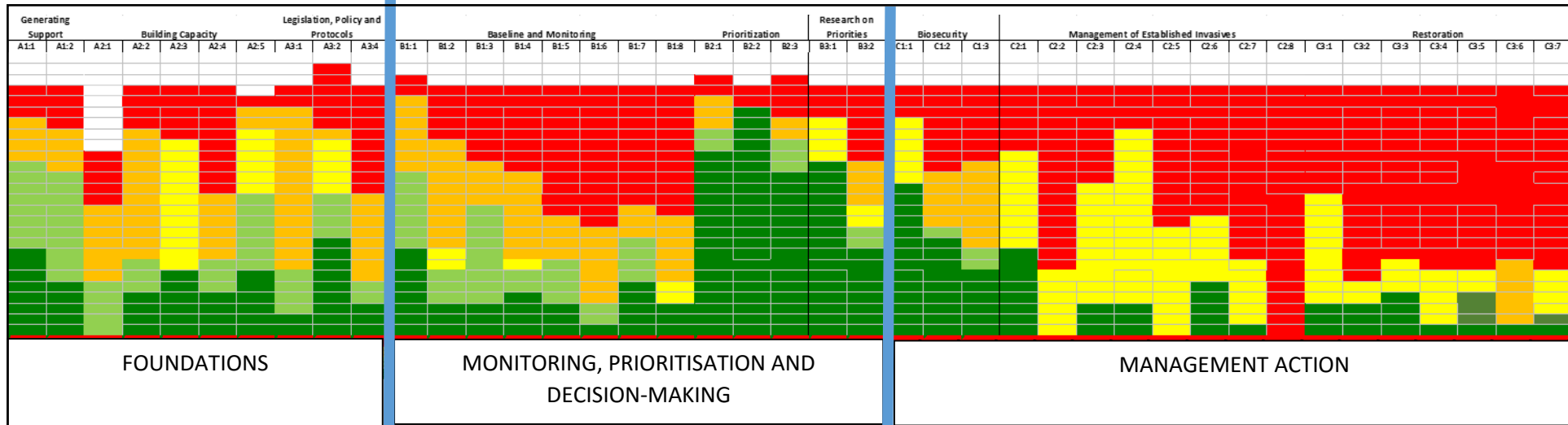
In June 2019, SPREP organized a regional workshop in Fiji to launch the project in the Pacific and review the regulatory and policy status of invasive aquatic species in the region. Representatives from 14 Pacific region countries participated in the workshop and agreed to relaunch the existing regional task force to include the threat posed by invasive aquatic species in the high-level regional agenda. In parallel, Fiji and Tonga have taken the first steps at the national level to develop their respective national strategies and action plans with a view to tackle the environmental issues posed by biofouling and marine invasive species. The leadership of Fiji and Tonga will help other countries in the Pacific to develop their own national policies and use a wide range of tools and solutions that will be developed through GloFouling Partnerships.

To benefit from this global effort, all Pacific countries are encouraged to contact the GloFouling Partnership Project Coordination Unit (GloFouling@imo.org) to determine how they can ensure their participation in this important initiative.



HOW SUCCESSFUL ARE WE IN IMPLEMENTING THE “GUIDELINES FOR INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT IN THE PACIFIC”?

Endorsed by all Members of both SPREP and SPC, the “Guidelines for Invasive Species Management in the Pacific” provides the framework for which we as a region organise our work and measure our success. We began measuring success both as a region and individual PICTs back in 2015 as we designed and tested the “Guidelines Reporting Database”. To coincide with the new SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2026, the baseline was set at 2017. Thank you all for responding to the questionnaire. I encourage you to please respond to Josef Pisi promptly when he sends out the 2019 Questionnaire. The results of your input guide us to determine where we can assist and the 2017 results have and will continue to inform the basis of several projects and initiatives for the next 5 years.



EXPLANATION: The 2017 Gap analysis guides where assistance is needed on a PICT and regional level. In the chart above, red is poor or non-existent ranging through to dark green which is highly successful. The rows represent the number of PICTs, FSM occupies four cells (one for each state) and Kiribati three cells (one for each island chain). Each cell represents the state of an indicator at the end of 2017. The indicators are a measure of how a PICT has successfully implemented the thematic objectives from within the “Guidelines” which together represent a comprehensive invasive species country programme. In this instance the cells are stacked independently of PICTS for each indicator providing a regional indicator or trend rather than a distinguishable individual PICT indicator. The first area of the analysis is representative of the foundations needed to enable invasive species management to occur and consists of indicators for generating support for invasive species management, building capacity and having legislation, policy and procedures in place. The second area of the analysis is representative of PICTS indicators for monitoring baselines and change, prioritisation and decision-making. The third area of the analysis consists of indicators for management action being biosecurity, management of established invasives and restoration of high value sites. The indicators are collected on an annual basis using the PILN Network members, followed by



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SPREP assistance and utilising existing global databases where possible to monitor progress of the region. To gain a greater understanding you can match the corresponding column heading codes with those of the survey questionnaire.

ANALYSIS: The Pacific in general has made significant progress in raising awareness of invasive species in country. Some PICTs have good capacity with a national invasive species coordinator and a national workforce. Legislation is good across much of the Pacific and there are operating procedures for some invasive species management activities. Baseline monitoring has been good in some PICTs with terrestrial surveys more common than marine surveys. Most PICTs do not have comprehensive surveys of all islands or areas. Prioritisation of pathways and species is comprehensive and almost all PICTs have captured this within a National or Territorial Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan. Most PICTs also know where to seek assistance regionally. The majority of PICTs have some ongoing management of priority terrestrial plants and animals with a few priority species having been eradicated. There is a small amount of marine invasive species management going on being primarily on crown of thorns starfish in sensitive areas. There is a small proportion of PICTs managing multiple invasive species to protect or restore valuable sites.

STRATEGY MOVING FORWARD: Continue to support PICTs requiring assistance to be successful in the first two thematic areas. Significantly scale up management action in all PICTs that have been successful in the first two thematic areas, have successfully completed pilot activities and where human resource requirements match availability. Focus on activities which utilise the community such as site-led restoration or activities where outside resources can be utilised through the PRISMSS to significantly step up action leaving the PICTs to maintain the outcomes (e.g. eradications and biological control of weeds. Ensure all activities and procedures are well documented and shared via the Battler Resource Base and PILN Meetings.



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INVASIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Vacancy Announcements:

SPREP (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme)

SPREP has a number of vacancies and tender opportunities available. Please check out SPREP's [Job Vacancies page](#) for further information.

SPC (Secretariat of the Pacific Community)

SPC has vacancies and consultancy opportunities. Please check out the SPC's website for further information (<http://careers.spc.int/all-jobs>) or contact SPC ([SPC](#)).

Have a job listing or course option? [E-mail it in](#) and use PILN to reach out.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2020	Event	Participating Partner
20-24 April	10 th Pacific Island Conference for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, Noumea, New Caledonia	Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation (PIRT) including the Pacific Invasives Partnership
20-24 April TBC	Pacific Invasives Partnership Meeting, Noumea, New Caledonia	Pacific Invasives Partnership
27-29 May	2020 Pacific Ocean, Pacific Climate Change Conference, Samoa	various
11-19 June	IUCN World Conservation Congress, Marseille, France	various
10-14 August	5 th Pacific Invasive Learning Network Meeting, Samoa	PILN Teams, PRISMSS partners, PIP members

WHO IS PILN?

There are currently 22 teams from 19 Pacific island countries and territories:

- American Samoa
- Northern Marianas
- Fiji
- French Polynesia
- Guam
- Hawai'i
- Gilbert Islands, Kiribati
- Line Islands, Kiribati
- Kosrae State, Federated States of Micronesia
- Marshall Islands
- New Caledonia
- Niue
- Palau
- Pohnpei State, Federated States of Micronesia
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- Vanuatu
- Wallis & Futuna
- Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia

Disclaimer: Articles contained within this or other PILN Soundbites do not necessarily reflect the views of PILN teams, SPREP or the Pacific Invasives Partnership.



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