

Fifth Pacific Invasives Learning Network Meeting: Apia, 13 – 17 November 2023

Meeting Report

By Ursula Paul, SPREP/NZDOC

1. Background

The Pacific Invasive Learning Network (PILN) connects Pacific professionals and practitioners, so called ‘Pacific Invasive Species Battlers’ to share knowledge, expertise, tools, and ideas that are vital to managing invasive species effectively. PILN enables multi-disciplinary country teams to work together on strategies with critical input from other national teams and experts from throughout the region, resulting in a common vision and a plan for effective conservation action.

Collaboration, capacity building and support happens via email, on-line events, and social media. However, face-to-face meetings remain the best way to strengthen and build this network of invasive species practitioners in the Pacific.

The last face to face meeting happened in 2016, therefore this fifth PILN meeting provided the opportunity to reconnect and reinvigorate the network by celebrating our successes, share our experiences, and to find out how to utilise the Pacific Regional Invasives Species Management Support Services (PRISMSS) to scale up on-the-ground management action in your countries.

The meeting was hosted by the Pacific Regional Invasive Species Management Support Service (PRISMSS) at the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). PRISMSS, founded in 2019, is a coordinating mechanism specifically designed to scale up on-the-ground operational prevention and management of invasive species in the Pacific region. It was established in response to the gaps identified by national PILN team members from the collection of the annual regional Pacific Invasive Species Indicators (PISI) by SPREP. The PISI has indicated since 2015 that critical on-the-ground action was limited throughout the region.

Several significant milestones were reached during this meeting, such as the highly anticipated 2023 ‘Pacific Battler of the Year’ Award won by Tonga’s Viliami Hakaumotu, marking the first time the event award had been celebrated in person, and the unveiling of the Navigator system, a user-friendly platform to communicate with PRISMSS and its partners.

This meeting with over 50 participants from 19 Pacific Island Nations and experts from all five PRISMSS programmes was made possible with funding support from the Global Environment Facility funded GEF 6 Regional Invasives Project, the European Union funded PROTEGE project, the New Zealand Government funded Managing Invasive Species for Climate Change Adaptation in the Pacific (MISCCAP) project (including a secondee from the New Zealand Department of Conservation (DOC)), and the Government of France through a FONDS Pacifique Grant focused on regional cooperation.



2. Objectives

PILN's mission is to empower effective invasive species management through a participant-driven network that meets priority needs, rapidly shares skills and resources, provides links to technical expertise, increases information exchange, and accelerates on-the-ground action.

The Meeting objectives were to:

1. Share the state of Invasive Species management across the region, share success stories and case studies, and advance invasive species management in-country.
2. Introduce and discuss PRISMSS frameworks, systems, and tools in place to facilitate and address PICTs needs.
3. Discuss ways to invigorate future networking and collaboration between PICTs in sharing technical expertise, information, and successful management approaches.

3. Participants



The 51 participants came from every corner of the Pacific: America Samoa (10), Cook Islands (1), Fiji (2), French Polynesia (2), Federated States of Micronesia-Yap (1), Guam (1), Hawaii (2), Kiribati (2), Marshall Islands (1), Nauru (1), New Caledonia (2), Niue (2), Palau (1), Samoa (11), Solomon Islands (1), Tonga (4), Tuvalu (2), Vanuatu (3), Wallis and Futuna (2). Only Tokelau, Pitcairn Island, Papua New Guinea, and Northern Mariana Islands were absent for various reasons including illness.

Eight participants represented NGOs (16%). The others were from Government offices. Expertise ranged from the various fields of invasive species management including agriculture, biodiversity, biosecurity, environmental science, forestry, GIS, restoration and wildlife management. Male participants were in a slight majority with 30 participants (59%) compared to 21 female participants.

The ten main presenters and PRISMSS programme experts came from New Zealand and Samoa. A SPREP team member translated every session for the French speaking participants, and the event was superbly supported by a SPREP team of six additional team members.

4. Programme

Beside the country presentations and regional discussions, this year's meeting was focused on enabling each country to understand and access the services provided by PRISMSS (see appendix 1).

A highlight was the Monday evening opening celebration with the presenting of the 'Battler of the Year' Awards. This acknowledgment of extraordinary invasive species work with regional impact was first awarded in the year after the last PILN meeting in 2017. This year was the first opportunity to hand over the trophies for all seven recipients.



Viliami Hakaumotu receives the Battler of the Year Award 2023 from Lealaisalanoa Frances Reupena (CEO of Samoa's Ministry for Natural Resources and Environment)

In a significant step toward enhancing regional coordination in invasive species management, PRISMSS Navigator System was launched and celebrated on Thursday evening.

The programme was too tight, especially for the country presentations, when we had very limited time to discuss the fabulous contributions by each country. Each country was given 10 minutes, and it should have been 20 minutes to allow for discussions. As this was the start to the meeting, this may have influenced that discussions were often dominated by just two people. The mainstreaming session needed more time as we started late at Manusina, and the weed prioritisation was taking more time than anticipated, due to the need of robust discussions around the different weed species. This meant that the planning, training needs and feedback session on the last day had to be shortened.

All presentations were made available to everybody on OneDrive. This has been very much appreciated, and files were regularly downloaded.

5. Outcomes

Objective 1: Share the state of Invasive Species management across the region, share success stories and case studies, and advance invasive species management in-country.

1. Regional information

David Moverley reflected on milestones achieved since the last PILN Meeting: “In 2016, as a region, we were wrapping up the GEF-PAS Regional Invasive Species Project which provided an opportunity for much of the region to initiate or progress their national invasive species programmes and share in each other’s successes. Today as a region we have just updated the Guidelines of Invasive Species Management in the Pacific, established the Pacific Regional Invasive Species Management Support Service (PRISMSS) and are implementing a portfolio of activities over ten times what we were in 2016. We have significantly more support from donors, and we have the capacity and a plan to significantly step-up invasive species management in the Pacific further” (quote from press release).

2. Country presentations

Presentations were delivered by Members on behalf of 19 Pacific Island countries and Territories (PICTS) giving an overview of current national invasive species priorities and efforts to manage them effectively. Many were showcasing their successes, such as innovative traps, increased community involvement and progress with the use of natural agents. Challenges were also discussed. The major restrictions were funding, lack of equipment and turnover or lack of qualified staff. Other problems mentioned were lack of policies and plans to guide invasive species management and enforcement work, and problems to increase public awareness and involvement.

All presentations are saved in One Drive and accessible to all participants ([PILN 2023](#)).

3. Ecosystem Resilience Learning Network, INSPIRE

Miliana Ravuso of BirdLife International based in Fiji delivered a presentation about the new Ecosystem Resilience Learning Network (ERLN) which seeks to build on the success of the PILN by establishing a regional network of local conservation practitioners outside of governmental agencies working in the invasive species management space to share lessons, experiences and solutions. Benefits of ERLN will be:

- ✓ Developing stronger national voices for communities and Partners.
- ✓ Increasing peer learning between communities and sites to maintain ambitions and drive, and keeping the team inspired.
- ✓ Effectively targeting youth groups and the children ‘the next generation’.
- ✓ Creating continuity and succession in information sharing.

Participants from the Samoa Conservation Society, the Palau Conservation Society and BirdLife Fiji showcased the INSPIRE (Invasives Species Management for Resilient Ecosystems) programme.

Objective 2: Introduce and discuss PRISMSS frameworks, systems, and tools in place to facilitate and address PICTs needs.

1. PRISMSS Navigator

As part of the objective to raise awareness about the extensive support services provided by PRISMSS, the Navigator System was unveiled and introduced to members in a practical workshop conducted by GEF 6 Regional Invasive Species Coordinator, Josef Pisi, demonstrating the user-friendly online platform designed to streamline requests and store country and PRISMSS programme information such as invasive species indicators, capability development indicators, the clean boats, clean ports framework indicators and more.

Participants mentioned the usefulness of the training in their feedback:

- ✓ PRISMSS navigator is very important and informative.
- ✓ Use of Navigator to facilitate access to technical expertise and funds.
- ✓ NAVIGATOR is awesome.
- ✓ The Navigator is a great tool.
- ✓ I learned how the navigator compass works, and its importance. It's very reliable and easy to use.
- ✓ We have managed to access and learn about PISI an important tool to work with.
- ✓ Navigator tool - Very exciting!

2. Protect our Islands

The PRISMSS Protect Our Islands (POI) technical lead Monica Gruber of Pacific Biosecurity introduced the new clean boats, clean ports framework that will help enable countries and territories to better prevent the arrival, establishment and spread of invasive species. Eighteen countries completed clean boats, clean ports self-assessments, resulting in the first ever regional baseline for invasive species biosecurity.

Monica is excited about the outcome from her session: "It was great to get so many responses to the assessment last week. This gives us terrific baseline for what to Protect our Islands should focus on generally, and for the region!"

Major lessons drawn from the assessment are:

- ✓ Support for advocacy/awareness is by far the greatest need – which is consistent with other feedback that awareness raising was important. (93% asked for assistance)
- ✓ Despite EDRR being difficult to get support for, there is clearly a desire (86% asked for assistance).
- ✓ Fit for purpose legislation/regulation framework for domestic biosecurity need improvement (86% asked for assistance)
- ✓ Greater capacity (staff and resources) is high on the needs list (80% respectively 83% asked for assistance).
- ✓ We perhaps need to do some work to socialise the PMBT and DOC guidelines. I think they scored low as people weren't aware of them, rather than them not being useful.
- ✓ It's also very interesting that the most support was for actions that are in the "foundation" clean boats, clean ports category – indicating there is a long way to go in our journey, but also supports that what POI has been focusing on is on the right track.

In the evaluation, participant's major concerns were lack of readiness and, and methods of control.

3. Natural Enemies, Natural Solutions

The PRISMSS Natural Enemies, Natural Solutions (NENS) Programme team led by Lynley Hayes and Temo Talie of Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research, facilitated a participatory discussion to identify the top priority invasive weeds for the region for which natural enemies could be developed in the near future.

Participants were asked to vote for their most important weeds before the NENS workshop. The ten most selected weeds were then ranked according to this framework in a discussion with all participants. See results in table below:

Weed prioritisation tool at PILN 2023:

Species	Pre-workshop votes	Biocontrol impact score	Biocontrol cost score	Total biocontrol score	Weed importance score	Current control score	Overall importance score	OVERALL SCORE
<i>Taro vine</i>	14	80	28	2.86	560	2.00	280.00	800.00
<i>Tamaligi (Batai wood)</i>	19	50	18	2.78	560	2.00	280.00	777.78
<i>Leuceana</i>	12	50	38	1.32	560	2.00	280.00	368.42
<i>Honolulu Rose</i>	9	40	38	1.05	560	2.00	280.00	294.74
<i>Merremia</i>	19	15	38	0.39	560	2.00	280.00	110.53
<i>African Tulip Tree</i>	29	50	10	5.00	520	2.50	208.00	1040.00
<i>Koster's curse</i>	10	75	10	7.50	560	3.00	186.67	1400.00
<i>Mimosa sensitive plant</i>	11	15	38	0.39	410	2.50	164.00	64.74
<i>Panama Rubber Tree</i>	12	50	38	1.32	300	2.00	150.00	197.37
<i>Giant Reed</i>	7	45	10	4.50	240	2.00	120.00	540.00

Koster's curse (*Miconia crenata*) ranked highest in both weed importance and overall priority for work within NENS (which includes biocontrol impact and costs). But it only reached rank eight in the pre-workshop vote.

The weed with most pre-workshop votes (the African Tulip Tree - *Spathodea campanulata*), reached the second highest rank for overall weed importance, and the same rank for overall priority.

Four out of the five weeds with the highest weed impact scores were ranked highly on the pre-workshop voting. This shows that general opinion correlates with the more detailed framework approach, but also shows that some weeds will score differently with the two methods.

While most people gave us the feedback that their knowledge about weed impacts and how to conduct a weed prioritisation at home has increased with this workshop, others still assessed themselves relatively low, and training about widespread weeds and their prioritisation may be beneficial to them.

Several participants also mentioned that the public and authorities are still sceptical about the introductions of natural enemies, and therefore, more work needed to raise the awareness of the benefits of natural solutions, its possible impacts, and the possibility to combine this with chemical methods of control.

4. War on weeds and Resilient Ecosystems, Resilient Communities

In an interactive session facilitated by PRISMSS War on Weeds (WOW) Programme technical lead Josef Pisi, and Resilient Ecosystems - Resilient Communities (RERC) Programme technical lead David Moverley, all 19 countries and territories present self-assessed and determined their current capability levels and readiness to plan, manage or conduct a WOW or RERC programme.

Surprisingly with many invasive species professionals present, capability levels were assessed lowest for weed control methodologies, safe use of chemicals and site surveying. Capability regarding translocation skills also ranked low.

Capability was assessed highest for strategic engagement (stakeholder engagement and working with communities) and programme management (reporting).

While these assessments were for the capability of the nation as a whole, the selection of the participants may have influenced the results. The results are indeed similar to participants' fields of experience as requested in the pre-meeting survey.

5. Predator Free Pacific

Paul Jacques from Island Conservation presented convincing benefits of predator free islands: up to 750 times more seabirds and 250 times more nutrient rich nitrogen depositions. This results in up to 50% higher fish biomass, better resilience to bleaching events, and faster growth of the coral reef. Whole island eradications have increased significantly between 1995 and 2010 but since then become fewer as bigger islands and inhabited islands get targeted. For these to be successful, more innovative technologies are being developed, including heavier load capacities for drones. As more funds are committed to pest eradications, prioritisation of islands/atolls and islets for the best use of funds is now crucial. Paul explained the various considerations for such a prioritisation and provided the participants with a starting list of islands in each country or territory. He asked the participants to check the list and add more details to it.

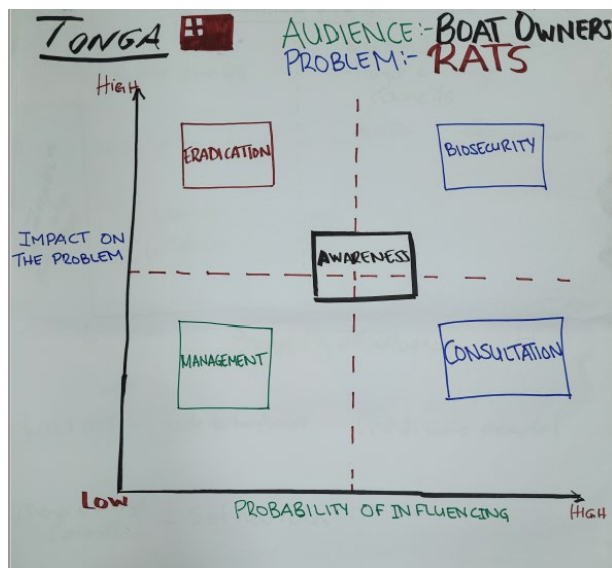
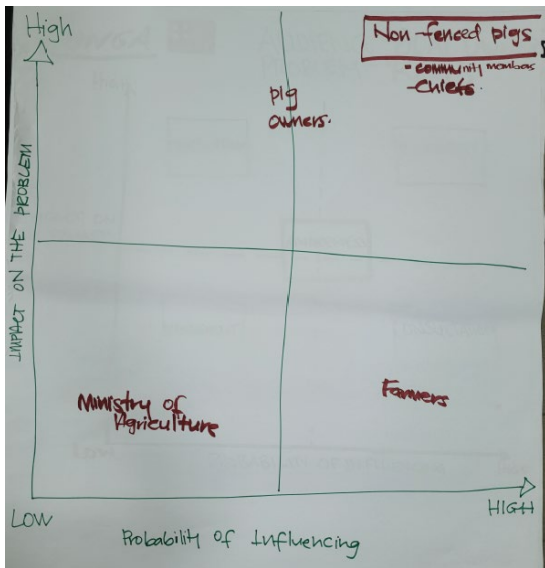
6. Mainstreaming

In a throwback to the 2016 PILN Meeting held in Samoa at Manusina Beach Fales, participants returned to Saleapaga, Upolu where Mainstreaming Consultant, Mr. Steve Menzies of Flinch Marketing led a workshop focusing on helping PILN participants understand the valuable impact of the mainstreaming work with a special focus on using social marketing approaches to scale up the management of invasive species and increase climate resilience of Pacific Island ecosystems and communities.

The setting at Manusina was great for working on this important cross-cutting theme more interactively. Participants were challenged to think about their passion in the invasives work, but also what barriers limit people's actions to join in the actions we see as so important. We then thought about ways to motivate communities to start working alongside invasive species professionals. In a creative exercise, country groups were discussing the best audience to influence the community in actions of greatest impact. We then profiled this person/ group of persons, looked at what support people would need, how to get information across to the audience (a memorable message/slogan), if there is a design to create an environment enticing people to act, and what control (rules) could be put in place to enforce action.

Recurring themes were limiting transfer of infested material (LFA, rats, invasive plants), keeping pigs in pens, rat control and eradication. Village elders, church leaders and students were often the most influential people selected. The participants were very engaged in the exercises and the product is not just some creative looking pages, but also some deep thinking about how to engage the community and work with them to achieve a desired outcome for all. For me the main message was that we need to word our message, so it touches people's lives, but also moves the influential people and the people who are impacted to action. Motivation and benefits need to be perceived greater than the barriers.

Below are some sample pages. The complete set is saved in the PILN teams SharePoint.



IAS PLANTS

① With interest plants: eaten nice, traditional activities

② CHANCES OF REGULATORY STIPES:

- Psidium
- Lantana
- Adenanthera
- Pinus caribaea

Impact

Production structure

school

Church

Customary Authorities

Individuals: sharing, selling, exchanging

Politics & Regulation Responsibilities

③ Directly local people.

Local people under 2 influences:

- Customary Authorities
- church

Promoting of NATIVE PLANTS

Probability of influencing

American Samoa



Name: Mele

Age: 40

Sex: Female

Job: Farmer

Family: AS

★ Trusted Source

~ ASCC-ACNR

~ Biosecurity Office

~ of the Governor

★ What's important to them?

~ Agriculture

~ LV ~ LFA

★ Hobbies/Interest

~ Farming

~ Food Production

★ Spend Time with:

~ Farm Workers

~ Community Members

★ Respect

~ Parents

~ Community Leaders

~ Matai

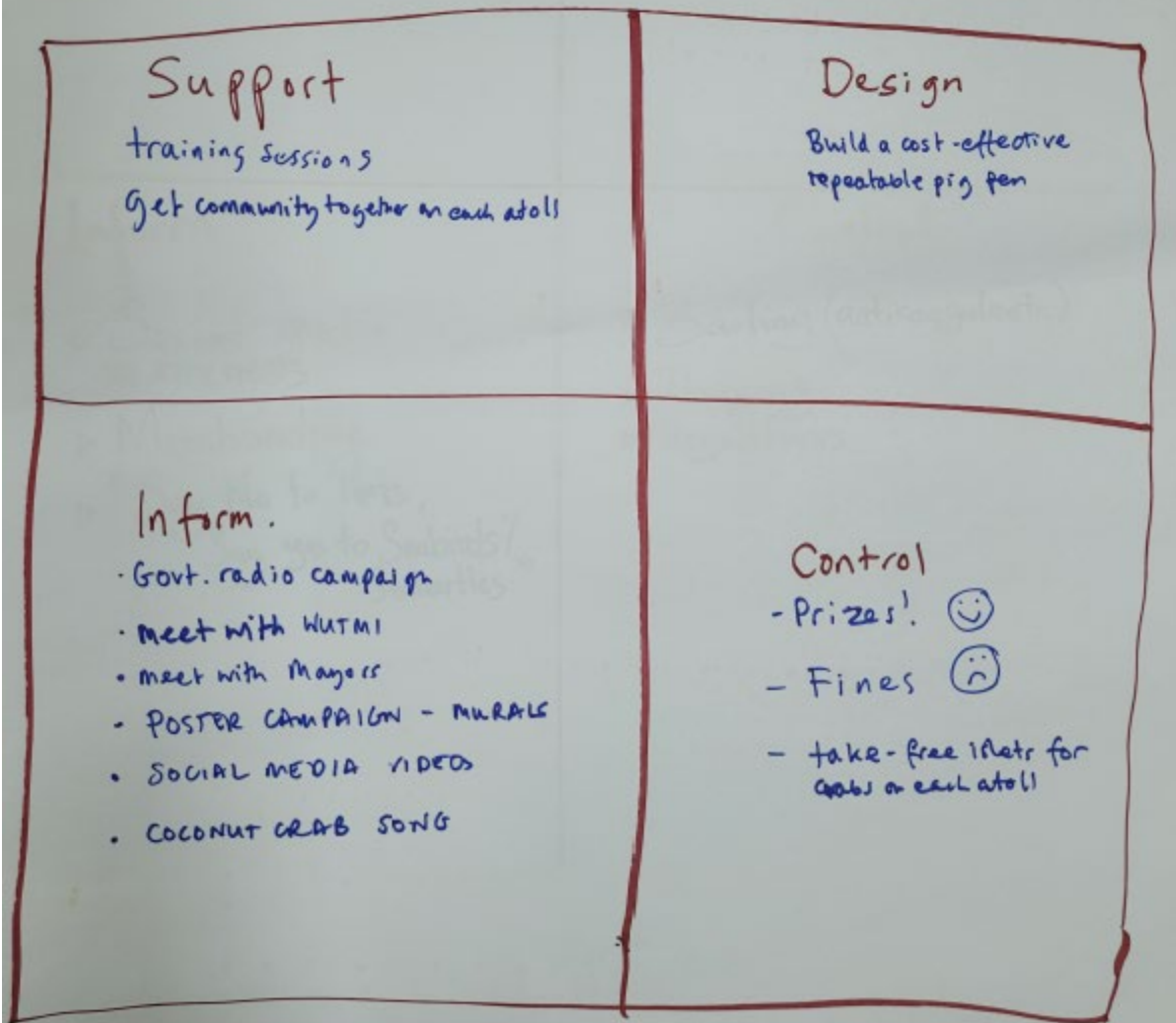
~ Gov. Leaders

~ Community Leaders

~ Ministers



Kojebarok baru. koj aikuij
 Wörwor Pig!
 Pen your pigs - eat more crabs!

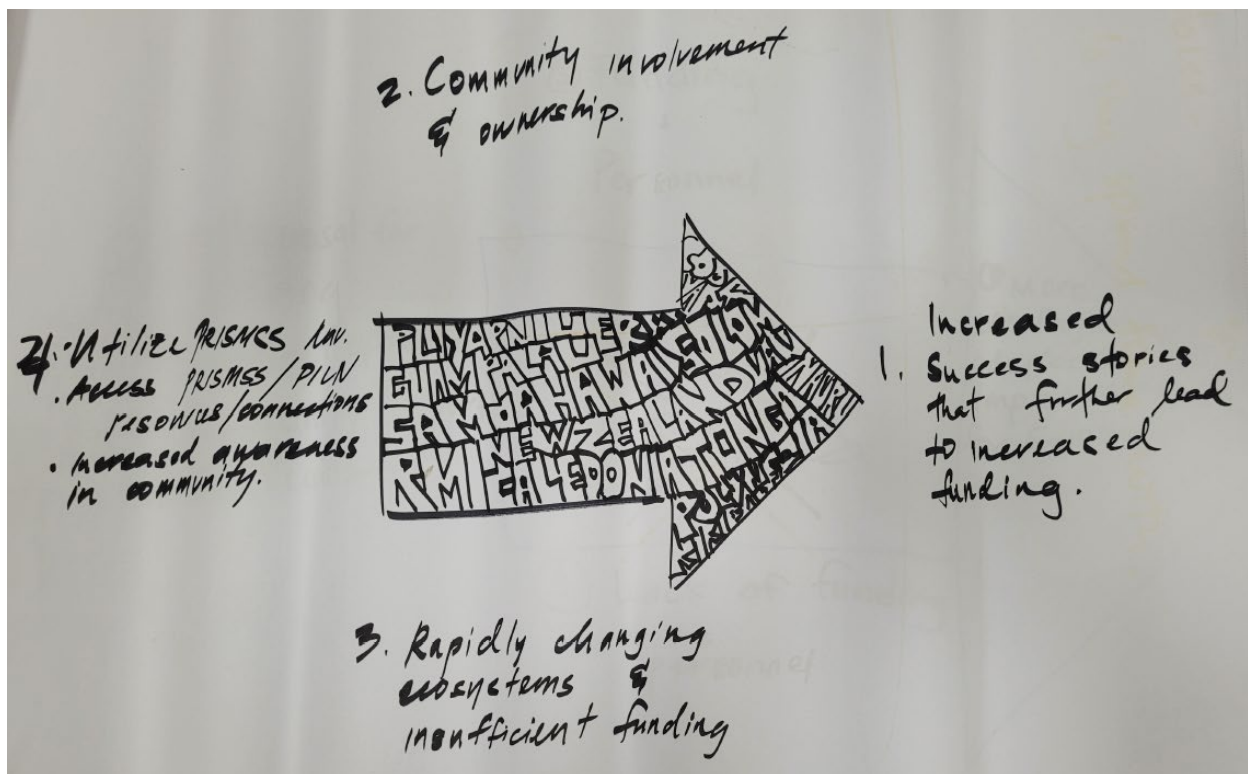


Objective 3: Discuss ways to invigorate future networking and collaboration between PICTs in sharing technical expertise, information, and successful management approaches.

1. Future PILN

Looking ahead, participants expressed their eagerness to share and learn more success stories with increased engagement of professionals and practitioners from non-government organisations in the next five years. Members also shared their visions for their PILN teams to utilise PRISMSS sufficiently to address the management gaps in their countries and territories through its five programmes, with hopes that PRISMSS would include a marine invasive species management focus in its portfolio.

This vision for PILN comes from a group work on the last day. Participants were asked to vision a future PILN and then work from there what the supporting factors, the barriers and the actions were that would lead to the realisation of that vision. Again, some groups were very creative:



Legend: 1: Future Vision, 2: Supporting factors, 3: Barriers, 4: Actions

Participants envisioned an expanding PILN with:

- ✓ Annual in-person meetings with delegations from all countries/territories.
- ✓ More regular virtual meetings for country updates and sharing of information.
- ✓ In-country visits bringing together country leaders, PILN national coordinators and stakeholders.
- ✓ PILN being recognised in regional fora as well as worldwide.
- ✓ A dedicated PILN coordinator employed by SPREP would streamline communication and maintain relationships for the network to grow.

Supporting factors mentioned included having enough funds, resources, staff, and time, but also getting recognition from government authorities.

Several actions to grow PILN were proposed:

- ✓ Sharing a list of PILN members with their respective specialist field(s) to start a more member-led support network.
- ✓ Share more success stories to attract funding.
- ✓ Increase networking with NGOs and communities.
- ✓ Proactively meet with government officials with support from SPREP.
- ✓ Involve research and create scientific best practices for IAS management and share it openly.
- ✓ Utilise PRISMSS and the Navigator for connections, resources, and visibility of regional needs.

Below is a word cloud of a visionary future PILN as (similar original entries are combined):



Other general feedback on PILN was collected on a feedback board available during the meeting and also shows what attendees expect for a future PILN:

Well done:	Need more of:	Need to start:
Implementation support	Demonstration of projects	Support for project planning
Social media	Money	Virtual meetings
Inspiration	Pathways for community action	Monthly or bi- monthly virtual PILN calls
New Relationships	Success stories (Biocontrol)	Training resources
Tools and Resources	Innovations	
Network extension	Exchange (learning)	
	Monitoring and evaluation case stories	
	Capacity building	
	Consistent updates from countries to PRISMSS	

2. PILN activities

While highest proportion of respondents prefer a monthly newsletter from PILN (24%), a webinar every 2-4 months was the most selected option (36%).

When asking the participants how they see their role within PILN, we received 45 answers from 30 participants. Below is the percentage for each answer:

- 17x battlers, sharing their work experiences (38%)
- 10x mentors, trainers, or supporters of others (22%)
- 9x ambassadors or advocates in their home country (20%)
- 9x learners and recipients (20%).

Realising that people have a full time job in their home country, which may or may not include support to PILN, the question about their available time was asked: About 19% only have a couple of hours or less) per month for PILN related work (this amounts to about 1-3 days a year) , 30% of participants can commit about 3-4 hours a month (4-5 days a year). Another 19% have about 5-8 hours a month (6-17 days a year), with the rest (32%) having more time to contribute to PILN (18 days a year or more).

As expected, the responses cover a full spectrum of availability and capability. For PILN to make best use of people with time and skills, a member list with this information may be useful for more practitioner-to-practitioner exchange and learning. To include everybody's field of expertise, may encourage exchange of information and sharing of experiences outside of PILN meetings.

During this year's PILN meeting, the most important and most enjoyed activity was the sharing of work experiences, both the country presentations as well as the ERLN, INSPIRE and PROTEGE presentations. All other activities got less than half the votes. Second and third most enjoyed activities were the expert teaching on IAS management and the support for reporting received during the navigator training.

While learning ways to communicate to stakeholders and communities, was important to participants in the initial survey, this activity did not attract any votes in the final survey. The mainstreaming activity was probably not recognised as communication activity, as people seem to have enjoyed it very much.

In conclusion, PILN is an important network for the participants, and they would like to expand the network, streamline communication, share success stories and help each other by passing on their most useful IAS control methods. They want this to be achieved by in-person meetings in a different country each year, quarterly webinars/virtual meetings. They prefer more interactive sessions, practical trainings, and site visits in the host country. Several participants offered some of their time to support others as a mentor, coach or trainer. For this to happen, more details about who would offer support and who would like to receive support, needs to be collected, collated, and communicated.

6. Training needs and capability development

A training needs assessment is a gap analysis between a desired performance and the actual performance. If the reason for the performance gap is either lack of knowledge or skill, then training is advisable. The performance gap could also be due to a lack of resources (equipment or time), not understood expectations or lack of motivation. Training alone would not remove those limitations.

When asked about challenges in their work, participants most often mentioned funding and resources, followed by lack of technical expertise and support to work more independently. Other challenges ranked from organisational and policy issues to lack of community awareness and collaboration. Lack of technical expertise is a clear training need. Technical support is a mentor or coach request to supervise a specific project. It is a request for a desired training mode (working alongside an experienced person). With more training, need for support will decrease, and the trainee will be more confident to work independently.

The Navigator capability framework is a well-designed tool for assessing technical training needs. It needs to be analysed and relevant training opportunities developed. As described in chapter 5, page 6 and 7 (WOW and RERC), the main training needs are weed control methods in general, safe use of agrochemicals, site surveying and how to re-introduce key species (translocation projects). Participants should be encouraged to complete the capability surveys for the other PRISMSS programs as well to give a clearer picture of training needs in each country.

During the feedback sessions, other non-technical training requests were mentioned:

- ✓ Proposal writing
- ✓ Project planning
- ✓ Programme management

- ✓ Stakeholder engagement, especially when goals and directions differ.
- ✓ How to keep communities involved
- ✓ Communication approaches
- ✓ How to find people to work with from communities
- ✓ Pathways forward for community action

A challenge to assess training needs comes from respondents not detailing their request for capacity building and training needs in more detail. An additional survey to gauge people's interest in specific training is recommended but could not be done during the PILN meeting 2023, due to time constraints and competing activities such as bringing other presentations to a good end.

7. Media releases

Liz Ah-Hi and Jordan Schuster were pro-active in getting good footage and write succinct but informative media releases, that were published on the SPREP website and local newspapers. The summarising first paragraph was also released on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Below are links to the four press releases regarding the PILN meeting:

1. PRISMSS to host the fifth Pacific Invasive Learning Networking (PILN) Meeting | Pacific Environment (sprep.org)
2. Tonga wins 2023 Pacific Invasive Species Battler of the Year Award | Pacific Environment (sprep.org)
3. Navigator System Launched at Fifth Pacific Invasives Learning Network Meeting, Improves Access and Coordination to Regional Invasive Species Management Services | Pacific Environment (sprep.org)
4. Successful Fifth PILN Meeting Strengthens Pacific Region's Fight Against Invasive Species | Pacific Environment (sprep.org)

8. Recommendations

With funding not being secure for long periods of time, the development of a simple form of virtual meetings may help continuity of PILN and the exchange of information between countries/territories. The best time to start is directly after a in-person meeting to make good use of the momentum and the familiarity with each other. With the SPREP team being stretched to their limits with supporting individual countries, the lead could be taken each time by a host country, and the content could be a more detailed presentation of their work and methods, with a discussion about these methods and their application on other islands.

Sharing a contact list of professionals who are willing to support others in a specific field (capability) could also help a more member-led approach as stated in the PILN mission statement:

PILN's mission is to

- ✓ empower effective invasive species management through
- ✓ a participant-driven network that
- ✓ meets priority needs,
- ✓ rapidly shares skills and resources,
- ✓ provides links to technical expertise,
- ✓ increases information exchange, and
- ✓ accelerates on-the-ground action.

The OneDrive is a good form of sharing information, and many appreciated the availability of all presentations. But there may be a better platform that is not dependant on a SPREP employee's access. SharePoint may be worth a try, as it is available through the 'PILN teams' group. It would be ideal if the platform also allows for searching people's capabilities so PILN members can contact someone for a specific issue. Management of the PILN members' details will need some attention and should be an ongoing task for a programme assistant.

Future PILN meetings should focus on more country-led discussions, possibly break into smaller groups to discuss specific issues (e.g. a weed group, a LFA group, a pig control group, Island rat eradication group and so on). It would be good if everybody would be in at least two groups, once sharing knowledge and once learning from others.

Participants prefer more interactive and practical sessions, therefore site visits where everybody can help with something such as deploying or checking traps, surveying a quadrant or marking plants would be a good use of time, but obviously need a bit more planning.

Capacity building is high on the list for a future PILN. The PRISMSS capability assessments could direct what training is needed, but it is also recommended to involve the PILN members to prioritise their training needs.

9. Thanks

The writer of this report thanks SPREP for the warm welcome and support to set-up office for five months in their midst. HR and the social committee were a big help in feeling at home at SPREP. A special thanks goes to the IT team who dealt with my connection problems so efficiently and going beyond their normal duty.

A massive thank you to the Invasives Species Team, that under the leadership of David Moverley does amazing work with so many invasive species teams in the various pacific nations. Thank you, Josef Pisi for your introductions and quiet way of giving me guidance in all things PILN and how to collaborate in the Pacific. Thank you, Isabell Rasch for your organisational skills and having taken on a big part of the logistics for the PILN meeting with help of the very efficient Vaega Toelupe and Dannicah Chan. Thank you Dominic Sadler for supporting the francophone participants, for your help with translations ('DeepL' revolutionised my experience with translations), and drone flying. Thank you, James Fakaua for IT and tech support, wrangling the travel system and lowering your standards while playing ping pong, so I could get a few points, too. Jezlla Peteru, big thanks for being a good friend and helpful, always going the extra mile, be it with travel bookings, Navigator questions or all the other odd things you helped me with. Thank you, Jordan Schuster for fantastic designs, taking photos and managing tight timelines so successfully. Thank you, Elizabeth Ah-Hi, for being such a nice desk partner and for the best words in all things media. A big thank you also to Makerita Atiga at the Island and Ocean Ecosystem group. You were always there when we needed some extra hands.

Thank you, PRISMSS partners and collaborators for patiently working with me on the programme for the PILN meeting, for listening to my ideas about evaluation and feedback from your sessions, and for doing such an awesome job during the PILN meeting. I learned so much from you all.

A huge thanks to all the participants at the PILN meeting. You enriched the meeting with your experience from all corners of the Pacific and you whetted my appetite to come and visit your special islands. Thank you for all your kind words, your patience when things did not go to plan, and for your collaboration during energisers and feedback activities.

I also thank the New Zealand Department of Conservation, especially Shannon Patterson and Souad Boudjelas from the Landscape Threats Advice team, for giving me the opportunity to get this enriching experience out of my comfort zone, for your encouragement and for walking alongside. Thank you, also to Di Finn, Marianne Marot, and the Eastern South Island Community Relations team, who let me leave my work in Twizel, and covered for me so superbly.

Last but not least, I thank my husband Nordahl, who took on the challenge to move his business from 'in-person' to 'remote assistance' for half a year, and managed to assure his clients that their service will remain at a high standard. He was a great support for me here in Samoa, dealing with many day-to-day issues and always encouraging me.



The fabulous SPREP/Invasives Species team making the PILN meeting a success.

Appendix 1: PROGRAMME – 5TH PILN MEETING 13 – 17 November 2023

	Monday, 13 November	Tuesday, 14 November	Wednesday, 15 November	Thursday, 16 November	Friday, 17 November
Time	Theme of the day				
	Regional Information	Regional Resources and Tools Protect our Islands	Mainstreaming and Networking	Natural Enemies - Natural Solutions, RERC, WOW, ERLN	Predator Free Pacific Future of PILN
8:30	9:00 start Welcome Regional focus PILN and PRISMSS	8:30 start PRISMSS overview Introduction to Navigator	8:00 start Travel to Manusina and have morning tea	8:30 start NENS: understanding the impacts of weeds and climate change	8:30 start Site Prioritisation presentation (RERC)
9:30	Morning tea/Photo	Morning tea	10:30 session start	Morning tea	Morning tea
10:00	Introductions Vision for PILN Country Presentations	Navigator practice - PISI, Capability Framework, Battler Resource Base...	Mainstreaming and communication	NENS activity: regional prioritisation of weeds to target with NENS	PFP presentation NENS: weed prioritisation continued
12:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch at Manusina	Lunch	Lunch
13:00	Country presentations continued	POI: Clean boats, clean ports framework and assessment	Photo Networking at Manusina	RERC and WOW presentations	Mainstreaming and Future of PILN: Action planning - what next? Farewell
15:00	Afternoon tea	Afternoon tea		Afternoon tea	Afternoon tea
15:15 16:30		Clean boats, clean ports framework assessment	Networking at Manusina back at SPREP about 17:30	ERLN presentations: Fiji, Palau, Samoa and French Polynesia	
18:00 - 22:00	PILN Opening dinner: at Siva Afi			Closing celebration: at Phat Burger	