

EXTERNAL REVIEW OF THE PACIFIC INVASIVES LEARNING NETWORK (PILN)

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“PILN has been the most effective and well-organised network my organisation has ever been involved with.” (Pohnpei team member)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Pacific Invasives Learning Network (PILN) was launched in May 2006 with the following mission:

To empower effective invasive species (IS) management through a participant-driven network that:

- *meets priority needs*
- *rapidly shares skills and resources*
- *provides links to technical expertise*
- *increases information exchange*
- *accelerates on-the-ground action.*

It was based on the establishment of in-country teams supported by a full-time coordinator and a partnership of regional and national agencies¹. At its core was the concept of ‘peer learning, Pacific islanders learning from others in different countries playing similar roles and facing the same issues who had found or applied solutions.

This review was carried out at the end of a 2-year pilot phase to assess the success of PILN, to suggest any changes needed and to see whether lessons learned could be applied to other programmes.

The question of whether PILN should continue beyond a 2-year pilot phase had effectively been answered before the completion of this review when one of the partners The Nature Conservancy secured the funding for a further one year’s coordination of the network. This was based on periodic self-assessment by PILN of the views of its participants and of its achievements which indicated high levels of satisfaction and good progress.

¹ Current partners are The Nature Conservancy, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Invasive Species Specialist Group, Conservation International, Palau Office of Environmental Response and Coordination, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), University of the South Pacific and USDA Forest Service.

This independent review has also found PILN to have been successful, to have exceeded some of its original expectations and to have had a strong uptake by countries. It thus supports the continuation of the network and devotes more time to suggestions for how it can be improved and how the 1-year of funding can be used as a transition year to consolidate, re-focus and secure its long-term future.

Success of PILN

PILN's key achievement to date have been to engage with 14 countries² as members: American Samoa, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Hawaii, Kiribati, Kosrae, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Pohnpei, Samoa, Yap and to provide them with support that they have valued. Individuals from these countries have formed a strong network that they are using to share problems and potential solutions

This support has taken various forms: bringing participants together for annual meetings, developing specific workshops to meet needs they had identified, passing around information, supporting learning exchanges and assisting with national planning. The result has been that most participants who responded to a survey felt that PILN had helped them carry out their invasive species work more successfully. Partner agency representatives all reported that they were very satisfied or satisfied with PILN. Funders were also well pleased with the networks progress and several considered that future support might be possible.

Strengths, weaknesses and challenges ahead

A full-time coordinator was considered PILN's greatest strength and having the resources to travel to countries an important factor in this. Much credit was also given to the skills and enthusiasm that Jill Key has brought to the role. The network of individuals was the second most identified strength allowing rapid sharing of information and providing people for agencies to interact with at country level.

Limited funding, for the running of PILN first and for implementation of country projects second, was the greatest weakness. This was tied in to a second weakness – lack of buy-in by key agencies which gave the network a poor institutional framework. Weaknesses at country level included the high turnover of PILN team members and some lack of inter-agency involvement.

Addressing the lack of funding and insufficient staff capacity were seen as the main challenges ahead, the latter becoming important as yet more countries join. There would also be issues about maintaining the personal contacts important to the network as it grew and keeping it moving forwards.

Current issues for attention

Addressing the weaknesses and challenges were obvious action points for the continuity and expansion of PILN. However some other issues about the way it currently operates were considered next. The first was country membership. PILN

² For convenience the word 'country' will be used to include countries, states and territories in this summary

began with a selection process which required countries to specify a small team of individuals each of whom had sign-off from their manager committing some time to working with the network. Some countries have joined more recently without a defined team but based on a desire to engage in the network and the presence of several individuals or a multi-agency committee to participate. Some tightening of the membership process and a tiered structure with several different levels is recommended. However there are challenges with the 'small team' concept with a turnover of around a third of the members and a third of the team leaders in 2 years. Teams had also generally not managed to achieve the level of multi-agency representation considered ideal.

Similarly the network has changed from an initial focus of working with countries on a small number of projects to a broader way of operating. It has assisted several countries with the development of Strategic Action Plans for invasive species and then tried to assist with the full range of priority tasks these identified. These plans are proving very valuable and they have proved a good way for PILN to engage with some countries. However some tightening of PILN's focus back to a limited number of projects may be useful with SPREP's Invasive Species Officer the logical person to pick up more of the planning role.

The partnership was seen as an important part of PILN but improvements were suggested in the way that it operates. Partners are encouraged to set out their intended contributions in letters of agreement and to re-form a steering committee to provide oversight of and support to the coordinator. Several other potential partners were identified. The benefits of merging the partnerships for PILN and the Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII) were discussed.

Future issues as PILN enters its next phase

Staffing

It was generally agreed that staffing arrangements needed to change as the network entered its next phase and potentially grew to include all the countries in the region.

Firstly, it was recommended that the coordinator position became a core one within a regional agency and SPREP was almost universally agreed as the most appropriate. This would ensure long-term funding and security for this key position. It was suggested that this needed to be done in a way that the coordinator still retained some independence and the partners continued to be involved.

Secondly, some sub-regional coordination was advocated, not through the creation of 3 more PILN positions but by making this part of the role of either existing or new positions in partner agencies.

Thirdly, it was suggested that the overall lack of funding was an issue for several of the agencies working on invasive species including the PII. A regional funding coordinator should be established as a position shared between different agencies.

Regional projects

One of PILN's goals is for teams to cooperate in addressing at least one regional priority. Four such priorities were considered at its second annual meeting. It is recommended that teams continue to concentrate on two of those, weed and rat management though the latter could be extended to include all terrestrial pest vertebrates. Invasive invertebrates including ants could be added. Further discussion is needed on PILN's role with the other two identified priorities, marine invasives and biosecurity. Both are important and more regional in nature in that one country's actions may affect another. However for PILN to work on them effectively it needs to structure its teams appropriately and ensure the participation of marine agencies for the former and quarantine agencies for the latter.

Where the focus should be next

It was suggested that PILN should focus on helping countries to achieve some more successful outcomes on the ground. For sharing successes so others can repeat them in the country is at the core of the network. This could mean forming teams based around issues such as weed management for example. It should also be looking to find and encourage more 'champions' - people to inspire others.

Consolidating around current teams and projects was recommended as more of a priority for the transition year than actively recruiting more countries. However those interested in joining should not be discouraged and should have individuals added to PILN's circulation list. Part of this consolidation would involve trying to increase the involvement of all the key agencies in PILN teams so that those with agricultural and environmental focuses work more closely together.

The bigger picture – managing invasives in the region

This review confirms that PILN is a valuable initiative that should be part of the future management of invasive species in the Pacific. Its model is also being looked at for work in other thematic areas, e.g. waste management. Similarly a review of PII in 2007 confirmed the value of that initiative with more of a technical focus through demonstration projects and secured it a further term of funding. There has been discussion of an Invasives Alliance for the Pacific in which these two largely formed an operating arm for the two key agencies with the mandate from countries to provide leadership in this area, SPREP and SPC. This warrants further immediate discussion. There are several funding opportunities coming up that might allow the establishment of the ideal regional structure to support the efforts of countries.

Conclusions

The two-year pilot of PILN has proved very successful and achieved more than had been expected. This participant-driven peer-learning network clearly should continue and be placed on a secure longer term footing. It is highly valued by its country participants and is now well-placed to contribute to real outcomes on the ground. A transition year provides an excellent opportunity to consolidate and establish a strong foundation before PILN expands to bring benefits to all the countries of the region.

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1. Introduction

The Pacific Invasives Learning Network (PILN) was launched in May 2006 with the following mission:

To empower effective invasive species (IS) management through a participant-driven network that:

- *meets priority needs*
- *rapidly shares skills and resources*
- *provides links to technical expertise*
- *increases information exchange*
- *accelerates on-the-ground action.*

It had four goals:

1. *PILN team members strengthen essential technical, organizational, collaborative and policy skills to advance invasive species management in the Pacific Islands.*
2. *PILN teams demonstrate on-the-ground action against invasive alien species and rapidly share their experiences, skills and resources.*
3. *PILN team members work cooperatively on high priority local and national invasive species issues.*

4. *PILN teams collaborate in addressing at least one critical regional invasive issue or opportunity.*

It was based on the establishment of in-country³ teams supported by a full-time coordinator and a partnership of regional and national agencies.

PILN was initially set-up for a 2-year pilot phase with this external review (TOR as Annex 1) at its end to provide the partners and participants with an assessment of its value and effectiveness and suggestions for the future. The review was considered urgent as the funding for the network was coming to an end and it was to be used by partners, particularly the Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), to determine their future support. It was thus designed as a relatively brief review to answer the necessary questions while minimising the time and costs involved.

However since the initiation of the review, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), one of the PILN partners, secured a further 1-year's funding for the operation of the network coordinator. This takes the immediate pressure off and provides PILN with a 1-year 'transition phase' following the pilot. In some ways this is recognition that the pilot phase has been successful and this was also the conclusion drawn from several internal assessments. So while this review also had to assess whether PILN has been successful from an external viewpoint, its focus became rather more on how PILN might be modified in the future to increase its effectiveness and how it can best be integrated with other programmes.

A summary of this review will be taken to the SPREP Meeting in September which will enable countries and the Secretariat to discuss how the latter should contribute to the future of the network.

Prior to undertaking this review I was the Start-up Consultant for PILN in 2004/05 but not involved in the implementation of the network and thus considered able to provide an informed but independent assessment. I also spent a period as consultant to SPREP in 2006/07 to assist in bridging a gap in filling the Invasive Species Officer position, and worked with the PII on one of its demonstration projects and attended three of its annual meetings. The supervisory team overseeing this consultancy felt that with this background I could also be asked to provide some brief comments on the bigger picture (not included in the TOR since potential consultants might not have time to become familiar with the issues). There is thus a section examining how work on invasive species might best be coordinated across the Pacific considering issues like the possible merging of PILN and PII and closer cooperation between SPREP and SPC.

Methodology:

This review was undertaken over a 1-month period in which visits were made to 4 countries (Annex 2) – 2 founding teams and 2 that joined in the second year - (meetings in two others were cancelled due to plane problems); face-to-face

³ Throughout this report the word 'country' will generally be used to denote the countries, territories and states that form individual entities within the network.

discussions were held with representatives of 8 Partners and Collaborators and 2 others contacted by phone or email using a questionnaire (Annex 3); Forty-four country participants were invited to comment using a slightly different questionnaire, meetings were held with others in four countries and phone conversations were had with one. Twelve individual questionnaire responses were received (Annex 4).

2. Success and effectiveness of PILN

This section assesses PILN's results against its original goals, presents the views of participants and others, and attempts to measure outcomes of different types.

2.1. Appropriateness of mission and goals

All respondents except one considered that the stated mission and goals were appropriate though two additional goals were suggested:

- Financial and institutional foundations of PILN established
- External links to the Network fostered

It was noted that the network has a participant-driven emphasis so not all the goals were addressed equally. One respondent considered that the mission was too broad leading to confusion over the role of PILN.

However in subsequent discussion some have questioned whether 'on-the-ground' action should actually be a goal of PILN. This is considered in section 2.2.3.

2.2 Achievements in relation to mission and goals

2.2.1 Internal Reviews and Assessments

PILN has conducted several of its own evaluations which all indicated good progress of, and strong satisfaction with, the network as follows. These are summarised here though they cover several different topics addressed in different sections of this report. Detailed findings are available in the coordinator's 2006-08 Summary report⁴.

Work Plan benchmarks

The first PILN workplan contained benchmarks for 2004-2008 which were to be used to track PILN's progress. All 2004-2007 benchmarks were achieved. One 2008 one: '*More PILN teams have secured additional funds for IAS management projects as a result of being in PILN*' has been identified as 'not achieved'. Several other 2008 ones are 'in progress' or awaiting a post-pilot phase.

Benefits of participation

⁴ PILN Pilot Programme, May 2006-May 2008. Summary of the achievements of the network over the pilot programme. Unpubl. report, Dr Jill Key, PILN Coordinator. May 2008.

The coordinator carried out an evaluation of the benefits of the network in Nov/Dec 2006 six months after its launch. Half of the participants (15 of 30) returned forms representing 5 of the 6 founding teams and all but one considered that they had benefited from involvement. Ten expressed a high level of satisfaction. It was considered from knowledge of those who did not respond that this was due to work pressures rather than a lack of satisfaction.

A further survey was undertaken in November 2007 with questionnaires sent to all 200 on PILN's email list. 31 responded (including 19 team participants and 7 partner representatives) with 83% considering that they had benefited from the network and 77% considering that it was doing enough.

PILN impact indicators

Three categories of impact indicators were developed after discussion with partners and collaborators covering in-country projects, funding and collaboration. Some proved difficult to measure because PILN's role in projects was unclear and because too much data was required. There was significant growth in the number of IS projects, the number of species being worked on and the number of islands being worked on, with PILN involvement, which largely relates to more countries joining the network. Two species have provisionally been eradicated, Tilapia from Palau and rats from islands in Fiji and Pohnpei, though the former project had started before PILN and its contribution to the rat work is unclear.

PILN report card

A 6-monthly report card was developed bringing together 27 different indicators including benchmarks and impact indicators discussed above. This shows a slow steady increase of most indicators as the network has expanded successfully. One particularly significant indicator is that the number of people now on the coordinator's PILN email list has increased from 60 in June '06 to 265 in May '08 so a large number are now connected to, and in a position to receive benefits from, the network. There is also evidence of 'on-the-ground' achievement with PILN teams having provisionally completed two eradications and working on an increased number of species.

2.2.2 Assessment - Goal 1: Strengthening skills

PILN's 1st goal was for team members to '*strengthen essential technical, organisational, collaborative and policy skills to advance invasive species management in the Pacific Islands.*'

PILN has worked to strengthen on the ground skills through training courses and learning exchanges. It organised or encouraged the development of nine well-directed training opportunities detailed in the coordinator's 2006-08 report. It also financially supported 14 exchanges and individual training visits, most of which only occurred recently with support from Le Fonds Pacifique. It has also provided opportunities for

participants to learn planning skills through the running of strategic action planning workshops in several countries.

All but one country participant (92%) expressed satisfaction with PILN and the gaining of new skills was listed as one of the reasons for this. It is too early to measure the benefit of recent exchanges and we will only be able to assess PILN's success in this area in time when people have a chance to use their newly acquired skills in country projects.

2.2.3 Assessment - Goal 2: On-the-ground action and sharing experiences, skills and resources.

PILN's 2nd goal was for team members to 'demonstrate on-the-ground action against invasive alien species and rapidly share their experiences, skills and resources'.

The majority of participant questionnaire respondents (7 of 11) said that PILN had helped them carry out their IS work more effectively and it was clear that this was largely a result of receiving specific information that they had then applied.

Peer learning started even before the launch of the network. Joel Miles of Palau and Tavita Togia of American Samoa met in 2005 as part of the design team and discussed the killing of *Albizia (Falcataria)* trees. An email subsequently received by Joel from Tavita discussed in detail the safety precautions required for this work based on actual incidents. He recommended goggles to prevent sap splashing into the eyes and gloves to protect the hands, particularly when crews were competing to see who could girdle more trees by the end of the day! This seems a perfect example - someone with detailed, practical knowledge obtained from doing the work passing this on to benefit another country setting out on a new programme. Many similar examples could be identified.

The extent to which PILN has increased 'on-the-ground' action is less clear. Less than half of the participants felt that PILN had been successful at increasing the amount of IS work in their country and where success had occurred it was usually through action planning rather than work on the ground.

Two years is however a very short time in which to see outcomes at ground level, particularly in the Pacific. What PILN has clearly done is assist countries to be better planned and organised, a vital first step, so that they are now either moving to more effective work on the ground or at least poised and ready to do so.

What goal PILN should have in relation to 'on-the-ground' action is also unclear. Its key role is increasing the capacity of individuals to be able to carry out such action and to act as a catalyst to encourage more action to occur. The extent of its actual involvement in projects is an issue requiring more discussion. Clearly it cannot provide the funding or the personnel to work on projects. However it is important that its participants are working on projects to develop the skills to share with others in the network. Ultimately PILN's reason for being is to contribute, in its particular

individual way, to reduce the ‘on-the-ground’ impact of invasive species in the Pacific.

2.2.4 Assessment - Goal 3: Co-operative work on high priority local/national issues

PILN’s 3rd goal was for team members to ‘work cooperatively on high priority local and national invasive species issues’.

Behind this goal was the idea that invasive species were a multi-sectoral issue and PILN aimed to bring individuals from different agencies together to work together. It also asked country teams to identify their priorities.

It is clear that this goal has been achieved for all the countries with teams with the possible exception of Niue. At the meeting in Palau founding teams developed individual work plans around their priority projects. Later discussions between them and the coordinator showed that a large number of their tasks were accomplished. These included field activities and significant awareness raising programmes in particular.

PILN projects and associated work plans are not so clearly defined for most of the teams that joined in the second year and the high priority issue that many of these worked on was strategic action planning. There seems to have been a move away from this project focus by the coordinator and others, reflected in the agenda for the second annual meeting. At the same time the second group of teams may not have been in such a strong position as the founder teams to work on projects until they had done more planning.

The strategic action planning looked across the whole range of IS issues to identify a programme of activity that could be done over the next year or so. Whether PILN aims to work across the whole programme or focus a team on one or two projects is an issue discussed later (section 4.1.7).

2.2.5 Assessment - Goal 4: Addressing Regional Issues

PILN’s fourth goal was for teams ‘*to collaborate in addressing at least one critical regional invasive issue or opportunity.*’

Issues identified

At the 1st Annual Meeting (2006) four technical areas were identified from team applications as priority areas of common interest: **public awareness, strategic planning, weed management and island restoration**. Each was discussed by a sub-group of the meeting and lessons learned, strengths and weaknesses identified, together with how PILN could help. However it was identified that the only meeting objective not achieved was ‘*To identify a regional invasive species project of common interest, to be developed over the next year or so*’. It was suggested that this should be tackled as part of a review of the Regional Invasive Species Strategy (RISS).

At the second meeting (2007) four main areas of technical concern were identified beforehand by participants and formed technical sessions that were the main activity of the meeting. One, **weed management**, was the same as in 2006, but three were different: **marine invasive species**, **biosecurity** and **rat management**, though the last was a first step towards **island restoration** in a number of cases.

Addressing the issues

2006 issues

Public awareness

- Social marketing workshop by RARE Center for Nature Conservation in French Polynesia in September 2007

Strategic action planning

General workshops:

- 1-day workshop for Marshall Islands in Nov 2006 included initiation of an interim protection plan to prevent new introductions of invasives
- National species prioritisation and action planning for Samoa August 2007.
- Meetings on the coordination of invasives work in Fiji in November 2007 and May 2008 (at which the future production of a Strategic action Plan (SAP) was agreed).

Specific workshops to draft SAP's:

- Pohnpei, Palau, Kiribati (2 workshops), Kosrae, Marshall Islands, French Polynesia and Yap (initial workshop) in 2006-08

Weed management

- Being worked on by PILN teams in many countries

Island restoration

2007 issues

Marine invasive species

- Workshop on marine invasives in Samoa March 2007 funded by IUCN Oceania
- National marine Invasives training and survey in Palau July 2007.

Biosecurity

- Work on sourcing existing information and modifying database to be the subject of a CEPF proposal
- Training, legislation and enforcement issues largely referred to SPC

Weed management

- Work ongoing in many countries
 - Several learning exchanges
 - Comprehensive weed survey in Palau (USFS)
- Planned for 2008/09*
- Road construction guidelines workshop (USFS)

- Weed course adapted from NZ Dept. of Conservation (SPREP)
- Data management course – Kosrae (USFS & SPC)
- Pacific Biological Control Meeting – Fiji 2009 (USFS, SPC, Landcare Research)

Rat management.

- Experimental eradication of rats from atolls – joint workshop in Pohnpei in February 2007 with Island Conservation, PII, Conservation Society of Pohnpei

PILN’s contribution to addressing these 2007 issues:

The review questionnaires asked whether PILN had made a significant contribution to managing these four issues and the responses were as follows:

Marine: Yes – 5, no – 1, don’t know - 13

Biosecurity: Yes – 7, little evidence – 1, don’t know - 8

Weed: Yes – 9, don’t know - 6

Rat: Yes – 10, don’t know – 3.

Clearly the perception is that PILN has achieved more with the last two more practical on-the-ground issues as might have been expected. However its contribution to all four has been viewed as significant by quite a few individuals.

Future issues

The questionnaire also asked:

- what were the priority issues that PILN should help with in the future?
- whether it should be the four identified in 2007 or whether some of these should be dropped and others added, and
- whether there were any priority issues that PILN was not well placed to deal with that should be left to others?

The results generally supported continuing to work on these issues and one respondent commented that a *“lot of thought went into defining these and much more needs doing before new ones are adopted.”*

Considering each in turn:

- Marine - several said “yes” to continuing involvement but others were unsure or wished it dropped.
- Biosecurity – a general “yes” and to also include ‘within country’.
- Weed management – “yes”
- Rat management – many wished to see this expanded to ‘terrestrial vertebrates’ (pigs, birds, mongoose, monitor lizard, deer, etc) with several emphasising birds.

Others that individuals wished to see added were:

- Ants and other invertebrates – one placed this ahead of rats
- Restoration, recognising that invasives management is often not an end in itself

- Freshwater (e.g. tilapia) – considered more of a priority than marine for some countries
- Aquaculture – a growing threat
- public awareness
- monitoring
- rapid response

The only areas that single individuals considered that PILN should not work were legislation and biocontrol. However there seem no grounds for such a conclusion. Encouraging the drafting of model legislation for countries was identified at the outset as an activity PILN might encourage. PILN appears well placed to play a coordination and information exchange role for biocontrol and one person identified this as a priority as they were concerned that SPC's methodology for agricultural pests did not sufficiently assess impacts on native species.

Discussion:

What does PILN 'working' on a regional issue really mean? In the case of marine invasives, what has largely happened to date is that PILN has flagged the issue and it has been picked up by partners or others – e.g. IUCN Oceania organising a workshop and ISSG developing a funding proposal. PILN has also helped raise awareness of the issue within SPC. In this respect PILN acts as a facilitator and catalyst. It appears that the issue was first brought up by a participant at the first annual meeting who questioned where the others working on this issue were and the coordinator and others picked up on this to make it one major focus for the next meeting.

Returning to the way the original goal was written, PILN teams 'collaborating in addressing' the marine issue would presumably require most or ideally all teams having someone with a marine responsibility. This could become a target for the network, but possibly at the expense of other issues. Alternatively, if PILN moves away from the 'small in-country teams' model (discussed in section 4.1) and becomes a wider network, then individuals from within it could form a 'marine sub-group'. This approach was recommended by the coordinator in her summary report, with the suggestion that PILN moved forward through meetings of technical subgroups because the network had become too large for all to be networking effectively as one group. She identified weeds, rats, and marine as three obvious technical themes.

My view, if we see the transition phase as one of consolidation, is that PILN should concentrate for now on one or at the most two priority issues. These should be ones in which significant peer learning is possible and on-the-ground action achievable. If one was picked I would recommend weed management for then following reasons:

- cross-sectoral so assisting in cooperation between agencies
- lot of work going on
- results achievable and success happening
- successful exchanges already occurred
- PII also working on demonstration projects in this area providing opportunities for closer cooperation

A particular opportunity has been identified to coordinate work on *Meremia peltata* which is being tackled by several countries.

Rat management might be another, for the current coordinator has interest & expertise in this area and there are certainly successful ‘recipes’ to be transferred and applied.

I would contrast this with marine invasives where there is little work going on, results will be hard to achieve, etc. This is not to deny the importance of the issue, or the fact that some peer-learning is possible e.g. other countries could learn from the training and survey carried out in Palau, but it is still in its infancy. A representative of IUCN Oceania considered that the support of PILN for the Apia marine invasives workshop that they organised was crucial to make it a success and that PILN should continue to be interested in marine invasives. One respondent did not see PILN having a role translating the marine issue into management action and thought this better left to agencies with the mandate and expertise. It seems to be an issue for the partners and other agencies to continue to work on, e.g. IUCN Oceania, PII on the technical side, TNC on policy. The Hawaii group also has much to contribute here. If PILN were to contribute significantly, more team members would need to have responsibilities in this area.

Biosecurity is acknowledged as a regional priority based on the adage that ‘prevention is better than cure’ and one respondent identified it as a ‘natural’ for a PILN project though discussion would be needed on which particular aspect of this large framework should be the focus. However it is not clear that PILN has made much of a contribution to this issue yet and the coordinator’s ‘follow-up’ report to the Moorea meeting does not identify any immediate activities. For PILN to work effectively on biosecurity its teams clearly need members of the key agencies involved, particularly those involved in border control (e.g. Quarantine) and risk assessment (usually Agriculture). These are relatively poorly represented at present (see section 4.1.3) though this could be turned around with a targeted effort.

The coordinator has flagged the idea of PILN working increasingly in thematic groups, e.g. weeds, terrestrial vertebrates, etc. This issue is examined as part of a discussion on the future structure of PILN in section 4.1.4.

Recommendations:

1. PILN should continue to put emphasis on weed and rat management and aim to expand the latter to include other terrestrial pest vertebrates particularly birds. These issues are ‘regional’ in that they represent shared problems that can benefit from shared solutions, but not perhaps regional in the sense of PILN’s fourth goal and requiring a regional solution.
2. PILN should use the current ‘transition’ year to consider strategically what truly regional issue it should focus on for the next 3 years. Marine invasives and biosecurity are two options. Focusing on one issue would not mean that PILN should stop encouraging work on others, just that it would put less coordinator and team member time into this.
3. PILN should consider placing an emphasis on invasive invertebrates, particularly ants as an issue that several countries see as a priority. (Section 5.2

considers how PILN might assist with the Pacific Ant Prevention Programme (PAPP) which is relevant to this).

2.3 Level of satisfaction of stakeholders

Those involved with the network have expressed a high level of satisfaction with it from the outset.

2.3.1 Country participants

Six questionnaire respondents considered PILN was ‘very successful’, 5 ‘successful’ and 1 ‘fairly successful’. Comments included:

- “PILN has been the most effective and well-organised network my organisation has ever been involved with.”
- “I recently talked with Mrfor the independent evaluation of the SPREP and I realized that the only effective and efficient SPREP program I know is...PILN.”
- “The coordinator has made the link between people from the Pacific.”

Seven of 12 respondents reported that it had helped them carry out their work on invasives more effectively.

The possibility that most of those who did not respond to the questionnaire were not satisfied with PILN needs to be considered. However this is not believed to be the case and high work loads and limitations of computer facilities are likely causes. There was universal enthusiasm for PILN at country meetings and countries were not selected on the basis of their apparent satisfaction with PILN. Coupling questionnaire responses with outcomes of country meetings, positive responses were received from 11 of the 14 member countries. One country of the three that did not respond in any detail was Niue which is considered an inactive team at present. A second is known to me personally as a strong fan of PILN and the third only has a two-person team and thus more limited capacity to respond.

2.3.2 Partner and Collaborator representatives

Eight respondents reported that they were ‘very satisfied’ with PILN and 4 were ‘satisfied’. One noted that they were ‘very satisfied’ with the network as a whole but ‘not very satisfied’ with the partnership behind it and this was echoed by another. Another considered that the relationship between PILN and PII needed further work so that each would leverage off the other.

Several respondents said that there was room for improvement & change and this is partly what this review is about. The network’s initial focus was on organising itself, developing teams and building up and this has largely been done successfully. Now is the time to consider comments like: “expanded too quickly and not as strong as it might be at this time”; “work load issues and things not happening as quickly as expected.”

2.3.3 Funders

Several funders were asked why they had supported PILN, what their level of satisfaction with the network was and whether different future alternatives for the structure of PILN might affect its eligibility for further funding.

Joe Murphy reported that PILN was attractive to the **US Department of State** (USDS) because it was a new partnership with a creative approach (endorsed by US technical agencies) to a problem that threatened both the biodiversity of fragile island ecosystems and the livelihoods of vulnerable populations dependent on agriculture. The Department was very satisfied with PILN which seemed to have met its objectives for the pilot phase. More importantly, it seemed to be valued by the island countries.

USDS would be open to providing support to PILN in the future, provided funds are available. Changes in PILN's structure would be unlikely to affect its eligibility for grant funds, although having the status of an NGO would offer some advantages for PILN as far as the ease of administration and flexibility in decision-making for US project funding is concerned.

Claire Thorp of the **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation** (NFWF) reported that PILN's application for funding received consideration from NFWF in recognition of the fact that the spread of invasives is one of the critical factors in the ecosystem degradation. From NFWF's point of view, the network has performed very well as demonstrated by the founding and expansion of the network, creation and implementation of action plans, and general achievement of the benchmarks set for the project outcomes.

NFWF is changing its grant-making process to support projects defined by criteria and filters under development within new Keystone Initiatives. Whether PILN will fit these criteria is uncertain but eligibility would probably not be affected by any of the alternative structures being considered for the network.

John Watkin commented for the **Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund** (CEPF) that PILN had performed admirably and proven its role. The launch that he attended was assessed as a huge success bring PILN teams and CEPF grantees together and showing people that there were others facing the same problems they were. CEPF would probably consider providing further support in the future; indeed PILN might be well placed to contribute to assessing the success of the Fund's work in the region. Its eligibility of funding would not be affected by some of the changes considered later in this report, like the coordinator's position becoming a core one in an agency like SPREP. The Fund's key criterion is that funds cannot be provided to a national Treasury. John considered that only now was the role of PILN and how it could help understood, so the real achievements were just beginning.

Dalpat Nana of the New Zealand-based **Pacific Conservation & Development Trust** (PCDT) indicated that its funding of PILN was based on the recognised need to

control regional borders from pests and invasive species. (Comment: this suggests that PCDT might be a source of funds if PILN decided to concentrate some effort on biosecurity). Provided the network works collaboratively with other agencies and has the involvement of the local peoples and has direct benefit to them, it greatly enhances the possibility of funding from PCDT. The Trust has now re-looked at the phasing of funding and is now funding only once a year, but with more funds to allocate. This will allow for bigger projects to be funded on yearly basis.

2.4 Growth of the PILN network

The strength of the original concept, the value that the founding teams obtained from membership, and the advocacy of the coordinator and partners probably all contributed to the remarkably successful growth of PILN in two years.

American Samoa, Guam, Niue, Palau, Pohnpei State and Samoa all joined as founding teams in 2006 after 11 countries submitted applications.

The five not accepted, largely because at that time they could not identify a suitable team, all joined in 2007: Hawaii, Kiribati, Kosrae State, Marshall Islands and New Caledonia together with Fiji, French Polynesia and Yap State.

Requests have subsequently been received from Tokelau, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu to join.

Only one of the countries that joined, Niue, has subsequently become inactive within the network.

Some of the countries to join in the second year still do not have a clearly defined team – an issue discussed in section 4.1.1.

2.5 PILN's contribution to accelerating invasive species action

This is difficult to assess as there are no clear baselines before PILN and it is hard to separate out PILN's contribution as a lot of new activities were happening around the same time including the PII and a Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) funding round on invasives.

Country participant responses varied when asked whether PILN had been successful at increasing the amount of invasive species work in their countries from 'very successful' (1), successful (4), fairly successful (5) to 'not successful at all' (2). The two who gave the last answer were from a founding team that already had a lot of activity going on and a team that had recently joined.

The coordinator identified three activities that occurred as a result of PILN that probably would not have happened so soon, or at such a scale, without it:

- Invasive species action planning processes (SAP) at national/state level

- Inclusion of marine invasive species issues in national agendas
- Weed management including capacity building activities.

Clearly countries have valued the SAP process and respondents identified the other two areas as one in which PILN had made significant achievement.

2.6 Relationships

The main question addressed in this section is how PILN has progressed invasive species actions along with other institutions and groups working in this area. It is clear that PILN has built up strong relationships with all the key agencies involved in managing invasives in the region. It has also brought the skills of other agencies to bear on this task, e.g. the Rare Center for Tropical Conservation focussed on social marketing.

The development of such relationships has been assisted by the following:

- Key agencies being PILN partners or collaborators
- PILN having an enthusiastic full-time coordinator able to act as a contact point
- PILN running a large email list which receives regular communications from the coordinator, particularly the ‘soundbites’
- PILN working with agencies in delivering training courses or in-country support.

All partner and collaborator representatives were satisfied with PILN, as were the funding agencies contacted, which shows that such relationships are working well. There does not seem to be a need to change any current practices, though section 4.2. will include recommendations for adjusting the way the partnership works.

Country participants identified the information flow within the network as one of its strengths indicating that PILN is doing a good job of sharing lessons learned from its teams and partners.

2.7 ‘Outscaling’ and ‘upscaling’

This section briefly considers whether PILN has been able to apply lessons learned on invasive species management at a wider scale or to new areas (‘outscaling’) or transfer such lessons from field level to decision-making level (‘upscaling’).

The first comment must be that PILN has only been operating for a relatively short period, two years in the case of six founding countries and less for the other eight. Even two years is very little in the Pacific context. So it is too early to expect much achievement in these areas.

Specific examples of outscaling can be identified where countries have picked up techniques developed by others, particularly in weed management and rat control and eradication. However upscaling is clearly more challenging and there is little evidence for this. The Republic of Palau might provide a good case study in this respect as invasive species management has a uniquely high profile there. The President is providing regional leadership on the issue and a specific Invasive Species Coordinator

position has been established at a senior level in Government. This coordinator leads the PILN team and coordinates a National Invasive Species Committee. There is thus a very direct mechanism for lessons learned on the ground to lead to decision-making nationally.

2.8 Leverage

This section initially examines what follow on activities, projects or programs have resulted from PILN. Partner representatives were asked to identify examples of leverage within their agencies, activities that would probably not have happened without PILN. Most did have such examples.

Within SPREP, PILN has made the job of the Invasive Species Officer much easier by providing many in-country contacts that would otherwise have taken a long time to develop. Several other programmes have taken parts of the PILN model and begun to apply them to their own issues (e.g. waste management).

Within TNC, PILN had placed invasives on the radar of the Pacific Programme and people are now taking on some responsibility for the issue at programme and country level. It had also contributed to re-establishing close cooperation between Hawaii and other Pacific programmes of the Conservancy.

Other specific examples include the development of an Equipment Register by PII, assisting USFS to leverage funds for weed surveys in Palau, and leading to Birdlife International's involvement in a FIJI invasives committee.

A final example is PILN's contribution to the Global Invasive Species Database (GISD) managed by ISSG. The GISD was presented and evaluated at the first PILN meeting in Palau, allowing many potential users to become familiar with it and to feed in new information. Priorities for new species profiles were identified, errors fixed and information quality improved.

3. Strengths and weaknesses of PILN and challenges ahead

Analysis of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of PILN and the challenges it faces should be helpful in determining future directions and structures. These issues were addressed in questionnaires to partners, collaborators and participants and in individual conversations.

Strengths:

The presence of a **full-time coordinator** dedicated solely to coordinating the network was the most frequently identified strength (12 respondents) with many of these commenting on the skills and enthusiasm of the current one, Jill Key.

The second was the **network** of people connected together allowing rapid sharing of information. Specific parts of this valued included its diversity, friendliness, non-judgemental nature, and being participant-driven and focussed. The **information exchange** going on within the network was another well recognised strength.

While the **partnership** was considered a strength by several partner representatives it was not rated as such by country participants though the diversity of the network was valued. This indicates that participants are not seeing some of the partners engaged in any activities relevant to them.

One funder reported that PILN's acceptance by Pacific island governments as a platform for genuine cooperation across the region was one of its greatest strengths.

Network capacity building activities of **meetings, workshops and exchanges** were well-rated by participants and an important element was **hearing of successes** which contributed to a morale boost.

Weaknesses

Limited funding, for coordination of the network first and for implementation, was identified as the main weakness (14 respondents). Lack of **key agency buy-in** and poor **institutional framework** ranked next (11) followed by lack of staff (4) ranked next. Several individual weaknesses at the country team level were identified: **high turnover** of members, **composition** – lack of multi-agency involvement, **inability to maintain engagement**, **lack of influence** members have in-country, and concern about how they are working in relation to PII-supported Demonstration Projects.

Challenges

Many identified the challenges ahead as addressing the weaknesses identified above but a few different issues emerged. Addressing **funding** (8 respondents) and **staff capacity** (6) were seen as the key ones. There was also concern largely from partner representatives about **inter-agency partnership and cooperation** (3) and **lack of recognition and support at regional and country level** (3).

Participants identified challenges in **running the network** itself including:

1. Increasing the number of teams without losing personal connectivity
2. Bringing in most if not all countries
3. Keeping it going
4. Remaining original and progressive
5. Effective communication

They also saw **apathy, poor public perception** and **lack of time and energy** as other issues to be addressed.

4. PILN Continuity and Expansion Strategy

4.1 *Membership of PILN at country level*

4.1.1 When does a country become a member of PILN? What does membership mean?

In the initial design of PILN there was a well-defined application process for countries to join the network. They needed to identify a small team, the specific expertise of team members, have team members' managers approve their involvement and commit time to their participation, and identify specific projects they were working on. This process was used to recruit the founding teams.

This process served to ensure that the right individuals participated in the network, i.e. they were actively engaged in invasives management at an on-the-ground or more strategic level and they had the support of their institution and time available to participate. The idea of a small team was that some of the same individuals would attend each meeting providing consistency and facilitate them getting to know each other so that in turn this would enhance the sharing of problems and solutions.

It seems clear that this well-defined process and structure was necessary at the start of the network. However it has to some extent been lost. The question is whether the flexibility currently shown (as outlined below) is a good thing or whether a return to greater definition is needed.

Currently several countries have apparently joined PILN without a selection process requiring the identification of a team. Both Hawaii and Fiji are identified in the coordinator's 2006-08 summary report as "PILN Groups". French Polynesia also does not have an identifiable team though it provided very strong support to PILN by hosting (and partly funding) the 2nd Annual Meeting. New Caledonia is similar having an invasive species committee and according to the coordinator many active people but no defined team. However the New Caledonia contact person considers that the people listed in their original application are a team – with one substitution.

In effect, PILN appears to have welcomed some countries as members if they showed a keenness to join and had some individuals or a structure with whom the coordinator could interact.

Partners were asked for their comments on this issue during the review (Annex 3 – 'team criteria') and varied in their response. Some favoured a tightening of membership criteria and others favoured flexibility. The interaction between teams and invasive species committees were discussed in meetings in American Samoa and Kosrae – two countries with well-defined teams – and arrangements there seemed to be working well. However individuals from the countries without clear teams such as Hawaii, French Polynesia and New Caledonia clearly welcome their involvement in

the network and this might not have happened if the original strict membership criteria were adhered to. It is clear that this is a strategic decision that the partners and participants of PILN need to make.

Suggested approach

This review suggests that on balance the concept of a smallish PILN team should be retained. The coordinator should largely interact with a country and provide it with support through this team, rather than a national invasives committee or task force. Section 4.1.3 later identifies that there are problems in the turnover of individuals within teams and their lack of representation of some key agencies, but these don't outweigh the advantages of this approach.

A tiered membership system would be one way of addressing this issue. The top tier would be countries that had gone through an application process similarly to the initial one and formed a PILN team. The second tier would be countries with which PILN was engaged at the national committee level but which had not yet formed a team – Fiji, French Polynesia and probably New Caledonia would fit in this category.

Having a PILN team would be the key criteria for the top tier, having a multi-agency group or committee the key for the second tier. In a related network Micronesians in Nature Conservation (MIC) meetings are held every 9 months and non-members can attend these as 'guests' to determine if they subsequently wish to join. PILN could establish a third tier, equivalent to these guests for countries interested in joining which did not yet meet either of these criteria. A selection process in which team members can demonstrate the support of their agency should be re-instated and applied before countries reach the top tier.

The coordinator would be concentrating on countries in the first tier with the aim of helping them to achieve outcomes on the ground. With the second tier the aim would be to strengthen the committee and its planning and encourage formation of a team. Countries in the third tier would be encouraged to form a multi-agency committee as the first step. Section 4.1.6 looks at the relative roles of the PILN coordinator and SPREP's Invasive Species Officer and the latter might be more involved with the second tier.

There might also be another category of PILN member currently represented by Hawaii. It was recognized early on that Hawaii could contribute expertise to the larger effort. There are several hundred people engaged in invasive species activities in the state and several coordinating groups at the island or state level so the idea of a small team didn't make that much sense. While Hawaii would not say that it had all its invasives issues under control and would not benefit from PILN, it seems more likely to be a resource for the network. Its Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) steering committee could be the small group for the PILN coordinator to interact with.

If a 'resource' category was created then there could be a consideration of countries like New Zealand and Australia becoming PILN members. Whether this would be of any value needs to be assessed.

Recommendations:

1. PILN membership should continue to be based around small country teams.
2. PILN should consider establishing a tiered membership structure.
3. If a tiered system is not favoured, PILN should tighten its membership system, re-instating a selection process requiring team members to demonstrate the support of their agency for involvement in PILN. It should work with countries that have joined without clear teams to develop those teams.

4.1.2 Island teams

Some respondents have questioned whether PILN teams should not only exist at the country/state/territory level. PILN is operating at the State level in the Federated States of Micronesia and it is important that it continues to do so. The different States have different issues and working through the national structure has been considered less efficient.

The same might apply to other countries where there was not the same state structure but where there were large islands, or archipelagos that tended to operate independently. “Could Vanua Levu (in Fiji) have a team?” was asked by one respondent. Would island teams be a way for Hawaii to engage more fully? Would this be particularly relevant for countries with widely spaced archipelagos? Clearly there would be challenges in operating with more teams.

Recommendation:

1. The possibility of island teams participating in PILN should be evaluated by the coordinator and partners.

4.1.3 Is the team concept working?

Turnover of individuals

PILN suffers from the same challenge experienced by every programme or project in the region, the high turnover of staff. Analysis below shows that about a third (12 of 40) of the members of PILN’s founding teams had left them in the 1-2 years of network operation.

Founding country teams and numbers of members no longer involved in PILN:

Palau (0 of 6); American Samoa (1 of 5); Samoa (2 of 5); Guam (4 of 7), Pohnpei (2 of 5), Kosrae (2 of 5), Marshall Islands (1 of 5), Yap (0 of 2)

More than a third of the team leaders or contact people had also changed (3 of 8).

Leader changes in countries with defined teams

No change: Palau, American Samoa, Marshall Islands, Pohnpei, Yap
Change: Samoa, Kosrae, Guam

Clearly these high rates of turnover make it difficult for PILN to achieve consistency of attendance at meetings for example. This has already been seen by some to weaken the effectiveness of meetings (section 4.1.5). Ideally at least one team member would have longevity and be able to provide continuity.

Team composition

An important aspect of the design of PILN was that teams should be multi-agency, recognising invasive species as a cross-sectoral issue that could only be addressed effectively by a coordinated approach. In particular it was recognised that environmental and agricultural agencies had particular responsibilities and that quarantine/border control, which often sits within the latter was a high priority. This analysis initially sought to look at the composition of PILN teams to assess which agencies are involved in these. However for some countries it is not clear who is currently in the team and others do not have a team, so the analysis was broadened to consider the national invasive species committees or task forces/teams ‘within’ which the PILN teams sit. Results are presented by country⁵ for those for which the relevant information was obtained.

American Samoa (AS)

PILN team has members as follows: Environment (National Park of AS), Environment (Environmental Protection Agency), Environment (Department of Marine & Wildlife Resources), Research & Education – particularly agricultural and forestry (AS Community College Land Grant Program)

The American Samoa Invasive Species Team (ASIST) comprises the PILN team members plus representatives of Customs and Agriculture. Department of Agriculture has only re-joined ASIST recently and could be expected to have representation in the PILN team in the future.

Conclusion: Agriculture and quarantine staff have not participated in the PILN team but this opportunity exists now that they are again represented on ASIST.

Guam

Guam’s team has involved representatives of environment (Division of Aquatic & Wildlife Resources within Department of Agriculture), Forestry, Fisheries - Office of the Governor of Guam, University of Guam, and Biological Resources Discipline of the U.S. Geological Survey. The Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency do not seem to be involved. Guam has a large invasive species committee with representation of key Government of Guam and US Federal agencies.

Conclusion: Quarantine staff have not participated in PILN team.

⁵ This analysis is my assessment and it has not been referred back to countries for verification or comment.

Kiribati

Kiribati's team has members from Agriculture Division, Quarantine, Environment & Conservation Division, Department of Education and Wildlife Conservation Unit.

Conclusion: Kiribati's team includes the key agencies.

Kosrae State

The Kosraean team has membership of the environment agency: the Kosrae Island Resource Management Authority (Public Awareness Officer and State Forester). It used to have members from Department of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries and from Quarantine but these have recently left. There is an Invasive Species Committee with a wide representation including all key agencies.

Conclusion: Kosrae's team used to include the key agencies until representatives left. There is a strong committee who should ensure that replacements are made to restore a well-balanced team.

Marshall Islands

Team members who attended the Moorea meeting represented environment (Office of Environmental Planning and Policy Coordination), fisheries and aquaculture (USDA Land Grant). Agriculture used to be represented but quarantine apparently did not.

Conclusion: Marshall Islands team used to have most of the key agencies involved but new representatives are needed for several.

Palau

PILN team has involved members of the following: Environment (Office of Environmental Response & Coordination), Agriculture (Plant Protection), Forestry, NGO (Palau Conservation Society), Health.

Palau's National Invasive Species Committee (NISC) had the following membership in 2004 when its national invasive species strategy was endorsed:

- Office of Environmental Response and Coordination - 2 members, Terrestrial Unit Chief, Marine Unit Chief
- Ministry of Resources and Development - 2 members Bureau of Agriculture, Bureau of Marine Resources
- Palau Environmental Quality Protection Board - 1 member Pesticides Officer
- Ministry of Justice - 2 members Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection, Attorney General's Office
- Ministry of Health - 1 member Division of Environmental Health
- Ministry of Finance - 1 member Division of Customs
- 6. Palau Conservation Society - 1 member Education

Conclusion: Palau's PILN team is multi-agency with representation of most key agencies except quarantine, as is the national committee.

Pohnpei State

Pohnpei's PILN team has had several representatives leave and currently involves Quarantine, SPC Plant Protection and the Conservation Society of Pohnpei. Replacements are needed to restore a well-balanced team

Conclusion: Pohnpei's team needs some replacements to restore good inter-agency coverage but is one of the few to have a strong quarantine presence.

Niue

Niue's PILN team did originally have membership of agriculture, environment and quarantine and was lead by the first of these agencies. However it has since become inactive. A national committee was also initiated but it is unsure whether it is active. None of the previous PILN team members responded to my emails though the Director of Environment did.

Conclusion: Niue's original team was appropriately multi-agency but it has since dropped out of PILN.

Samoa

The PILN team has involved members of the following organisations in its two years: Environment, Agriculture, Quarantine, Fisheries, Private Sector, However currently both Agriculture and Quarantine are not represented (the former after a team member was 'stood down' and the latter after a very productive representative moved overseas). Samoa's National Invasive Species Task Team (SNITT) theoretically includes a comprehensive range of agencies but PILN team members question its effectiveness and there was poor attendance at the meeting called during my visit. This may partly be a result of the long-standing chair of SNITT recently moving to New Zealand.

Conclusion: Samoa currently lacks representation of several key agencies in its team. However the recent move of a senior staff member from Environment to Agriculture may assist in increasing the engagement of the latter.

Discussion

Only one of the countries for which information was obtained has the three key agencies of agriculture, environment and quarantine in their team. A few others used to have this composition but need to replace people who have left to restore it. In this situation PILN is not well placed to foster cooperation between the three key agencies at the team level, though where it works through invasive species committees this may be more likely to occur. However if partners accept recommendations in this review that PILN should focus on its teams then efforts need to be made to involve more of the key agencies in these. In particular there is minimal representation of quarantine in current teams and this would need to change if PILN is to make a significant contribution in the area of biosecurity.

Recommendation:

1. The coordinator should work with countries to further encourage the representation of the key agencies of agriculture, environment and quarantine in PILN teams.

4.1.4 Issue-based teams

Several respondents and the coordinator have raised the issue of whether PILN should form teams or sub-groups around issues. Jill Key considers that the network is already becoming too big for real networking. Ideal groups for meetings are 30–40 people and while 42 attended the first annual meeting of PILN, 65 attended the second. She suggests that sub-groups could be formed to meet in the years between the annual meetings and that weeds, rats and marine are obvious choices.

The transition year provides an ideal time to evaluate this model and how it would work alongside country teams. This issue is re-visited in section 4.3.1.

Recommendation:

1. Evaluate a model for the future of PILN that incorporates issue-based and country-based teams or subgroups.

4.1.5 Role of meetings

Annual meetings were initially seen as a key element for PILN but at the second one it was decided that a full meeting should happen every second year with thematic or sub-regional ones where needed in between.

One of the original ideas of PILN meetings was the most of the same people would attend from one year to the next, developing continuity and fostering closer relationships between individuals and perhaps between neighbouring teams. It was seen earlier that there had been quite a high turnover of team members. The analysis below shows that of 27 individuals who attended the first meeting only 11 (41%) attended the second representing a significant loss of continuity.

Feedback was received that the second meeting was less successful than the first because the strong founding teams had changed personnel and brought less to it. It was seen as spending too much time going over old ground to bring new participants up to speed rather than moving forwards.

Founding team reps. attending both meetings:

2. American Samoa: 4 to 1st meeting, 3 to 2nd - 2 attended both: Ikenasio Sagaga, Siafoi Faaumu
3. Guam: 4 to 1st, 4 to 2nd – 1 attended both: Diane Vice
4. Niue: 4 to 1st, none to 2nd.
5. Palau: 6 to 1st, 5 to 2nd – 3 attended both: Joel Miles, Joseph Tiobech, Yalap Yalap

6. Pohnpei: 5 to 1st, 2 to 2nd – 2 attended both: Konrad Englberger, John Wichep
7. Samoa: 4 to 1st, 4 to 2nd – 3 attended both: Natasha Doherty, Mark Bonin, Seuseu Tauati

Meetings were also expected to be of value to host countries and to contribute to their priority projects and this appears to have been the case. Both contributed to increasing the engagement of leaders with the issue. The Vice-President of Palau opened the first meetings and described his own experiences of invasive species and the Minister of Tourism and Environment of French Polynesia and the Mayor of Pao Pao Moorea opened the second. At the Palau meeting participants assisted in a weed control programme and after the second meeting in Moorea several participants helped to develop an Invasive Species Strategy for French Polynesia.

The network decided to move from annual to biennial meetings and this review has heard nothing to change that. Clearly the high turnover of attendees makes it hard for meetings to achieve one of the initial objectives of building a network of individuals who know each other well. This will be even more pronounced if meetings are only every two years. There are also major costs involved – a proposed budget for the Moorea meeting was approximately US\$229,000 of which over half was airfares.

However this means that PILN meetings will not be able to play an annual role in exposing new countries to PILN as guests before they become full members under a suggested tiered system.

4.1.6 Strategic Action Planning

The in-country support provided by PILN appears to have changed from an initial tight focus on two projects (one on-the-ground and one strategic) to a broader focus. Strategic action planning has been central to this. Just as it was important to question whether the loosening of membership criteria was a good thing, so this broadening of approach needs examination.

Strategic action planning fits nicely with the original design of PILN as the ‘strategic’ project which the network could assist countries with. It has also spread through the region assisted by PILN (and others) in just the way that it was hoped that the network would work – one country learning from the experience of another and individuals ‘carrying the torch’ from one to the next. There is also no doubt that such planning has been very useful and several country respondents stress this. Clearly the PILN coordinator and in some countries TNC have been responding to a need. This response has been positive for PILN and for countries. The coordinator has described the SAP process as the ‘glue’ for network engagement.

However it has led to a situation in which the coordinator has been trying to assist countries across a wide range of invasives issues, rather than a few specific projects. This planning and broad assistance role clearly overlaps with that of SPREP’s Invasive Species Officer (ISO). A long gap in recruiting an ISO contributed to this situation.

The job description of the ISO includes the following tasks that are relevant to this discussion (summarised here, not word for word):

- ensuring the implementation of the Regional Invasive Species Strategy (RISS)
- developing and carrying out projects to assist with this
- assisting island member countries to identify and document national/territorial status and priorities of invasive species
- developing and overseeing the implementation of conceptual frameworks, methods, tools and programmes for invasive species planning, management, training and resourcing
- Providing assistance with the preparation of technical and feasibility studies and advice on invasive species management to island members.

Ensuring close links between country strategies and action plans to the RISS and providing IS management advice are potentially key roles for the ISO. It is suggested that future national planning processes should be initiated by consideration of the Guidelines and narrowing down to local priorities. A question that partners and SPREP need to answer is what should be the future roles of the PILN Coordinator and the ISO in strategic action planning.

Options for Consideration:

There are arguments for the PILN Coordinator continuing to work with countries that do not have SAP's or Invasive Species Strategies encouraging them to develop them. This serves to establish a positive relationship between PILN and the country concerned which can then be used to develop a PILN team and specific projects for it to work on. Equally it could be argued that this task should be passed across fully to the ISO. What seems important is that the two individuals concerned debate the issue, with input from the partners, and decide on the way forward.

Working jointly may be the most appropriate solution. Both recently participated in workshops on Kiritimati Island as part of the process of developing Kiribati's SAP and this might be an ideal scenario though probably unrealistic because of cost. Alternatively the PILN coordinator could initiate the process in further countries and then pass the issue on to the ISO after some initial input. Both the coordinator and the ISO would then discuss all the issues within the SAP that the country requested assistance with. The ISO might take responsibility for most of the issues leaving a smaller number for PILN to take on which would form the basis of a PILN team. Which issues PILN should tackle could depend on what other country teams were working on, i.e. what synergies and opportunities for peer learning there were, and on what regional issue(s) the network had agreed to focus on (section 2.2.5).

Recommendation:

1. The future roles of the PILN Coordinator and SPREP's Invasive Species Officer in relation to strategic action planning need to be agreed by SPREP and the other partners.

4.1.7 Role of PILN projects

The previous section and section 4.1.1 identified how PILN's approach has broadened from an initial concept of small teams working on two projects, one strategic and one on the ground. At the first annual meeting teams developed clear work plans based on their projects and the coordinator demonstrated subsequently that significant progress was made on these. This approach was not taken at the second meeting.

Whether a tighter project focus should be re-instated is a strategic decision that the partners need to make. Potential advantages are:

- It makes it clear which projects PILN is concentrating on supporting in-country and it is thus easier to measure its achievements
- It is clearer for funders where PILN is concentrating its efforts and generating benefits
- It removes confusion at the country level about how PILN and PII are operating
- It may speed up on-the-ground action leading to more 'successes' which can then be transferred rapidly within the network
- It may help address staff turnover and transition issues. If the PILN team is based around well-planned projects then these projects will continue if a key person leaves and whoever replaces them would then join the team and have the necessary skills and knowledge passed on to them.

This would not mean that PILN would not listen to country needs outside these projects. But the coordinator would then pass such requests on to others, such as SPREP's ISO or SPC's technical staff or other partners for assistance.

Recommendation:

1. Partners should decide whether to re-focus PILN teams around a small number of specific projects.

4.2 PILN Governance

This section looks first at the partnership and then at the staffing of the network. There is wide support for the continued existence of the partnership so sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.5 look at how its current work can be improved. However, if a recommended staffing option (section 4.2.7) of the coordinator becoming a core position in a regional agency was adopted, the role of the partnership would change. It might then largely work in an advisory capacity. It is suggested that some of the recommendations for improving the workings of the partnership could be acted on now. Others could be left until decisions on future staffing are made.

4.2.1 Role of partners and collaborators

All current partners expect to continue as partners as PILN enters its next phase. However there is a level of dissatisfaction within the partnership with suggestions that some partners are contributing more than others. A key issue has been the difficulty of finding consistent funding for the operation of PILN and particularly the employment of the coordinator. The latter has been employed on a series of relatively short

contracts and the network is fortunate that Jill Key has been sufficiently flexible to live with this. Most partners could not even find a relatively small amount of money to contribute to the cost of this review.

Clearly TNC has played a key role in securing network funds but there appears to be a perception that SPREP has contributed little. This is clearly not the case. SPREP has assisted with emergency funding for the coordinator, support for the first meeting, made the Fonds Pacifique funds available for exchanges and taken some funds from other project areas to do this. It should be recognised that at the outset SPREP agreed to host PILN but that did not imply that it would find the resources to run it.

Partners were initially encouraged within the MOU to prepare letters identifying their intended activities and contributions to PILN (Clause VI Annexes). Most partner representatives were unsure whether their agency had written such a letter indicating how little significance was attached to them. A draft letter was obtained at SPC but it was apparently not finalised.

It proved quite a lengthy process for all partners to sign up to the MOU, particularly when legal departments were involved, so there was apparently little energy or enthusiasm left to write such letters. However it is suggested that this is re-visited. Such letters will clarify for the whole partnership what is expected of each and allow assessment on whether they have contributed as proposed. It would also assist in a process which should be developed to remove unproductive partners if required.

Recommendation:

1. Partners should complete individual letters of agreement as encouraged in the MOU, identifying their roles within the partnership and their commitments to PILN.

4.2.2 Clarification of differences between Partners and Collaborators

The role of partners is defined in detail in the MOU. This also addresses collaboration with other organisations (clause IV) and states that they could become partners by amendment of the MOU or collaborate informally or formally through complementary Memoranda. It does not however clarify any distinctions between partners and collaborators.

Collaborator status has usefully accommodated two entities that did not wish to become partners to the MOU: the Pacific Invasives Initiative that was itself a partnership and the National Park of American Samoa, one of the founders of PILN but a country-specific entity. The former has a Cooperative Agreement with PILN. However Birdlife International is also a collaborator yet appears to be playing the same role as partners.

Recommendation:

1. Differences between partners and collaborators should be more clearly defined.

4.2.3 Inviting new partners to join

The review assessed whether there were other agencies involved in IS work that should be considered as potential partners. Clearly there are issues of maintaining effectiveness as the partnership increases in size, but the key question becomes how the partnership will operate – addressed in the next section. Priorities for assessment based on discussions during this review would be:

- Birdlife International – noting that it has already signed a Cooperative Agreement with PILN which would be the basis of a letter of agreement within the MOU
- Partners of PII that are not partners of PILN – the merging of PILN and PII partnerships is discussed in section 5.1.1.
- IUCN Oceania

The following have also been suggested, though decisions on these might depend on which regional issues PILN decides to work on as priorities:

- US Fish & Wildlife
- Landcare Research, NZ
- Regional education provider – e.g. South Pacific Board of Education Assessment
- South Pacific Tourism Organisation
- National Trust (Fiji, NZ, Australia)
- Island Conservation
- Micronesians in Nature Conservation

This list does have a South Pacific emphasis and effort should be made to identify more potential agencies in the North Pacific.

Recommendation:

1. It is suggested that the existing partners consider inviting further agencies to join as partners or collaborators based on the above lists.

4.2.4 Partner representation

One question relating to the partnership is whether the right representatives have been involved and this was assessed in the partners' questionnaire. In general representatives were there partly due to the position they held and partly because of their interest or knowledge of invasive species. An important criterion was having consistent representation and the same individuals had managed to participate in most meetings and conference calls. There is a need for SPREP to clarify who its representative is as two staff have some involvement at this level. For other partners there did not seem anyone more appropriate than the current representative.

Choosing representatives who were involved in IS work was valuable but this meant that the individuals were rarely decision makers within their agency and able to access

funds. PILN was not generally managed ‘upwards’ successfully within partners, with the clear exception of TNC, and this should be addressed in the next phase. The support of senior managers will be important in securing a sustainable future for the network. Clause III.5 of the MOU states that ‘*Each Party will keep their respective organisations informed of co-operative activities undertaken within PILN pursuant to this MOU.*’ This could be strengthened.

Recommendations:

1. Partners should continue to operate through their current representatives to provide continuity.
2. These representatives should be encouraged to keep their senior management well informed about PILN and its contribution.

4.2.5 Role of Partners and how the partnership works

Respondents have identified that there need to be improvements in the governance of PILN, which largely means the operation of the partnership and the relationship between this and the coordinator.

Initially the partners formed a four-member Steering Committee whose main role was to support and provide guidance to the coordinator. It appears to have only met once. The coordinator has generally obtained the support she needed by talking to individual representatives. However more guidance would probably have been appropriate. Most representatives saw merit in re-establishing this committee and giving it a clear oversight role. In defining this role, agreement will be needed on decision-making, in particular what level of decision is referred to this committee by the coordinator and what level does it in turn refer on to the full partnership. The coordinator has operated with a great deal of flexibility to date which has allowed her to very effectively take advantage of opportunities that arose. However some of the changes in the way the network has operated don’t appear to have been formally endorsed by the partnership when they perhaps should have been. One example would be the more recent admission of countries as members without going through a team-based application process.

In addition to reviewing how significant decisions are made, clarification is also needed on the day to day ‘management’ of the coordinator. Should this come through the partners and a re-instated steering committee or through the line management within SPREP as the host agency? SPREP’s ISO may have a particular role to play here as there needs to be very close liaison between the PILN coordinator and this position. PILN has operated successfully to date so clarification rather than significant change may be what is needed. However it has been pointed out that Jill Key brought a wealth of experience to the role and thus could operate very effectively with relatively little guidance. A system should be in place that would allow a less experienced coordinator who needed significant help and guidance to do a similarly effective job.

The situation would presumably change if the coordinator becomes a core position in an agency. At that point the agency's line management would come more into play and partners could have more of an advisory role.

Sub-groups of the partnership have been formed as required, e.g. for fund-raising and for selecting the founding teams, and this seems to have worked well.

Currently the partnership operates largely through a process of monthly reporting from the coordinator and monthly conference calls. There have also been partners' meetings associated with each annual meeting. While the detailed workings of the partnership were not covered in the TOR of this consultancy, several partner representatives expressed concerns about the conference calls being too frequent and of limited value. It has been suggested that calls could be bi-monthly and more frequent before annual meetings, or only arranged when decisions needed to be made.

The coordinator currently produces a large number of reports for the partners and for donors. Whether this burden can be reduced, e.g. by combining two months for partners as has happened on occasions, needs to be looked at.

Section 5.1.1 addresses the possible merging of the PILN and PII partnerships. PII has also wrestled with the issue of how to make a partnership function and in that case work with a small coordinating team. At its last meeting it adopted the idea of developing an annual 'partnership work plan' which would set out the activities that both the team and the partners would undertake to advance the Initiative. This has not yet fully developed but is expected to be a good approach. PILN has tried the development of partner 'commitment lists' with the coordinator trying to hold partners accountable for these, but this also has not worked as hoped.

The frequencies with which partners engage with the coordinator/implementation team also differ. In PII's case the input of the partners has largely been through annual meetings but since last year the Coordinating Team are now reporting formally on a six-monthly basis and informally through the PII newsletter (quarterly) and through emails. PILN has monthly meetings through conference calls. Merging of the partnerships would provide an opportunity to combine what has worked well for PILN with what has worked for PII in establishing new procedures. It may not be worth the PILN partnership putting much effort into re-structuring how it operates or making major changes until it is agreed whether this merger will proceed.

Recommendations:

1. A small **steering committee** made up of representatives of some of the partners should be re-formed with its key role to support and provide oversight of the coordinator. TNC as main funder and SPREP as host agency are two obvious members. Availability to participate may be the key criteria in determining the other representatives.
2. The partnership should briefly review how it operates, particularly in its relationship with the coordinator, in order to clarify its procedures.

3. The frequency of teleconferences and the coordinator's reporting requirements should be reduced.
4. The partnership should not put a major effort into reviewing its operation nor make significant changes until the outcome of discussions about merging the PILN and PII partnerships is known. A merged partnership could learn from the different ways that PILN and PII partnerships have operated and devise a system based on the good points of each to serve the functions of such a merger.

4.2.6 Coordinator role

Continuing to have a full-time coordinator was a priority for almost every respondent and a key strength of PILN and most consider this sufficient for the present. It is suggested that the transitional year could continue on this basis if, as recommended, it is considered one of consolidation rather more than expansion. Future staffing arrangements can then be worked out during the transition phase subject to funding being secured.

Recommendation:

1. Ensure that PILN continues to have a full-time coordinator.

4.2.7 Future staffing for PILN

Four scenarios were presented to respondents for discussion (as Annex 4). These are considered here in turn, followed by favoured options for the future. The first two look at the coordinator position and the second two at increasing the staff resources of the network.

Scenario 1: Coordinator role absorbed into existing positions, e.g. at SPREP and SPC

This was universally rejected. It was felt that existing staff were fully committed and the network would die without full-time coordinator support at this point.

Scenario 2: Coordinator becomes a core position in an agency.

This scenario was widely favoured as a way of securing long-term support for the role. Respondents were asked whether they supported the coordinator continuing to be based at SPREP, i.e. becoming a core position there. All but one of the partner representatives and half the participants favoured this option (others were unsure) though several stressed that this dependent on SPREP fully supporting it. This last comment seems based on a misconception that SPREP could have done more up to now and that it has discretionary funds available which it does not.

Reasons for supporting SPREP included:

- The natural home – familiar with the region and its structures – environmental mandate

- With SPREP member countries feel they own the network
- Need to work closely with ISO position there
- SPREP's key role is coordination and it is good at it

SPC was considered a possible alternative as it was engaged in more work on the ground. If a technical PILN position was to be created under an expansion scenario then some thought it should be based there. One respondent considered that neither SPREP nor SPC had the capacity to support the position and it might be better in another agency like TNC, CI or IUCN. However it is clear that such agencies do not have the span of membership of SPREP or SPC and no annual mechanism to talk to countries.

Should the coordinator become an agency core position it was considered vital that it retained some independence and the involvement of the current partnership. How this could happen would need to be worked out with the agency involved and with those donors who fund its core positions. SPREP clearly worked hard to ensure that the PILN coordinator could focus wholly on the network, assigning general invasives roles to other biodiversity staff while the ISO position was vacant rather than the coordinator. It does have examples where staff positions are supported by advisory committees which would be one model for PILN.

Scenarios 3 & 4: Expansion of staffing.

Respondents were asked if the current staffing of a single full-time coordinator could handle PILN if all 22 countries in the region wished to join. While the majority said 'no', a significant number felt it could work based on concepts like the following:

- Strong founding teams would required reduced input – this appears to be already happening e.g. the American Samoan team and IS team felt that they would need little support but be able to help others
- Strong teams could 'adopt' and support newer teams – particularly if in a nearby country with similar issues
- The coordinator role would change in time to become more administrative – arranging exchanges, training courses and meetings – rather than having to spend a lot of time supporting and encouraging countries to join and develop their teams.

Two expanded scenarios were suggested.

Scenario 3: Having 3 sub-regional coordinators covering Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.

This scenario was put forward for several reasons.

Firstly the Micronesia sub-region appears to have embraced PILN more than the other two with half the teams from there (Palau, Guam and Pohnpei as founding teams and Kosrae, Yap, Marshall Islands and Kiribati joining in year 2). Analysing the possible reasons for this the following possible factors appear:

- The presence prior to PILN of individuals working predominantly on invasive species with their own networks – particularly Konrad Englberger (SPC Pohnpei) and Joel Miles (Palau)

- Outside agencies with a long history of working there (including invasive species) and able to link the different countries together – particularly TNC and USFS. These agencies then becoming partners to PILN.
- Government leadership – particularly the President of Palau who has provided US\$100,000 for invasives work and who with leaders of Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Territory of Guam and State of Yap formed a Regional Invasive Species Council
- Active conservation NGO's (e.g. Palau Conservation Society, Conservation Society of Pohnpei) ready to engage with PILN.
- Relatively small islands or groups of islands with limited capacity to manage invasives and thus keen on the networking opportunities that PILN offered.
- Countries/states that are used to working together – e.g. Micronesia Challenge, Micronesia Regional Invasive Species Council

The first two of these in effect meant that individuals were acting almost as Micronesia sub-coordinators for PILN, spreading the message, sharing information, taking training or action planning from one country to the next.

Secondly a key challenge for PILN is engaging with Melanesia. Currently Fiji and New Caledonia are involved but don't yet have teams and the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu have expressed interest in joining. A Melanesian sub-coordinator concentrating on engaging with these countries some of whom have very different issues (e.g. PNG and Solomon Islands due to their size) could be very helpful.

Thirdly, a key cost of PILN is air travel and it could be more-effective having much of the travel done within sub-regions. Finally, it was considered that confidence building and 'hand-holding' which are still significant activities for PILN are best done locally.

Respondents were divided on this scenario. A number were concerned at the loss of a Pacific-wide focus, considering invasives needed to be worked on across the whole region. The solution to this, and a better scenario as one pointed out, would be to have one Pacific coordinator (as currently) and three sub-regional coordinators working alongside this person.

Scenario 4: Having a 3-position support team consisting of Coordinator, IS Planning Adviser, IS Funding Adviser.

This scenario was advocated by the coordinator in her summary report. The position of planning adviser was presumably advocated to pick up strategic action planning, to continue to develop this for all countries and set up monitoring of their actions. The funding adviser was intended to address the one key benchmark that PILN had failed at: teams accessing more project funding by being part of the network.

This scenario was the most favoured among participants (6 of 11) though 2 would revert to the single coordinator if there were insufficient funds or work. Partner representatives were less sure. However it is worth noting that an option like the ISO taking on the planning role was not presented as an option to respondents in the questionnaire.

Assessment of Scenarios

Establishing the coordinator as a core position within SPREP is the favoured option to ensure the sustainability of that position and should be actively pursued. Country support for this can be sought at the SPREP meeting.

Any expansion of staffing needs further discussion. My assessment is that the following need to be taken into account:

- Cost
- Perception – PILN is all about stimulating peer-learning within countries and should not be seen to create a bureaucracy.
- Benefits of sub-regional focus
- Need for planning and funding support
- Increasing the engagement of different PILN partners and other agencies
- Which priority regional issue(s) PILN seeks to address.
- Existing agencies, their mandates and present structure
- Funding opportunities coming up (e.g. GEF-PAS and CEPF Polynesia-Micronesia)

Overall, the network needs to be cautious about creating new full-time PILN positions when it has proved difficult to secure consistent funding for the coordinator. I consider that it should address the sub-regional issue but not by creating 3 full-time coordinators and address planning and funding constraints but not by creating 2 full-time positions. It is also not a matter of one scenario or another but looking for options that address all the points above.

I would draw some conclusions now and then set out a possible option. The first conclusion is that PILN should not establish a planning adviser as this is a key part of the role of SPREP's Invasive Species Officer. Secondly PILN is not the only programme suffering from a lack of operational funding. PII has also had difficulty finding funds for those demonstration projects that have completed their planning. So funding coordination can be looked at as a widespread need.

A preferred scenario has been assessed as the following:

1. **PILN coordinator – SPREP-based and role largely unchanged.**
2. **Assisting the coordinator in the sub-regional coordination of PILN becomes part of the job description of three individuals.** This would need the support of partners but have the advantage of fostering cooperation between them and SPREP which has no sub-regional positions. There could be a number of options for this. The first would be for **existing staff to be given the necessary time and responsibility** and possibilities within existing partners/collaborators might be:

Melanesia: SPC in PNG, Fiji or Noumea (the former might be best given the particular challenges within PNG), CI in Atherton, TNC in PNG or Brisbane, USP in Fiji, Birdlife International in Fiji, IUCN in Fiji (noting the possibility of a marine invasive species position being created there).

Micronesia⁶: SPC in Pohnpei⁷, TNC in Pohnpei, Palau, OERC in Palau⁸, USFS.

Polynesia: SPREP in Samoa (could even assign this sub-region to the PILN coordinator but might create some perceived bias), CI in Samoa, USP in Samoa, NPAS in American Samoa, ISSG in New Zealand, USFS in Hawaii, TNC in Hawaii.

It must be emphasised that this would not just be a matter of loading PILN work on to existing work programmes – i.e. expect people to try to do more. It would mean agencies committing to re-defining the responsibilities of positions.

The second option would be to **create new positions along with other agencies with this as part of their role**. In this respect it is noted that one of the recommendations from the Moorea meeting was that Biosecurity Coordinators should be established for each sub-region (presumably an issue for SPC and SPREP to work on). Whether any partners have an interest in creating new sub-regional positions and thus might share in the process of securing the funding has not been investigated. The challenge is there for them to come up with options.

Developing a sub-regional presence is apparently one of the issues being looked at by a current review of SPREP, though it seems likely to be rejected on the basis of cost. However SPREP sharing a position and costs might have more appeal. It has been identified that positions can be established more cheaply within NGO's rather than regional agencies, or maybe a position could be shared between the two. Several partners largely work through these organisations in country (e.g. Birdlife, TNC) and maybe they can identify opportunities. A Micronesian sub-coordinator would need to work closely with the Regional Invasive Species Committee and could perhaps share a role helping to facilitate that.

Of course a key step is to work out the tasks of a sub-regional coordinator and the time and resources required. One alternative might see them doing the lion's share of country visits within their region and feeding issues and opportunities to the Pacific-wide coordinator. An alternative would still see the latter aiming to meet with most countries in the course of a year or two, with the relevant sub-regional coordinator present who would then follow up on issues and opportunities raised locally.

3. Coordinating of planning is taken on as part of the existing role of SPREP's ISO.

4. Coordinating of funding as a new position shared between different agencies.

It has been suggested that securing operational funds for invasive species work should be a full-time specialist job rather than added to the tasks of an existing role. Though whether someone could take on this, plus a sub-coordinator role for PILN, or whether any of the partner's existing fund-raisers could do it could be considered. The question probably becomes where a new position might sit and how it might be

⁶ A link to the Regional Invasive Species Committee would be important here.

⁷ It is noted that the person in this position is due to retire shortly which might provide an opportunity for the role to be modified to include some formal involvement in PILN.

⁸ This is a national role and it might be too much to expect it to take on regional responsibilities and risk reducing the national effort.

funded. I consider that it could best sit within SPREP or SPC so that it is linked most closely to all the countries of the region, and it would aim to provide for country priorities whether they were worked on by PILN teams or as PII demonstration projects or through another agency.

An alternative might be for the coordinator to take on this role if there is help with sub-regional coordination of the network and the ISO takes over any planning tasks.

Recommendations:

1. Discuss with SPREP the option of making the coordinator a core position within the secretariat, retaining some independence and the continued involvement of the partnership, should be investigated as a best-choice scenario. Seek country support at SPREP meeting.
2. Investigate ways to achieve sub-regional coordination by making this a task of current or new positions in, or shared between, partner agencies. SPREP and SPC should explore this in the first instance.
3. Facilitate the SPREP ISO assisting PILN member countries in invasive species planning
4. Create a new regional funding co-ordinator position.

4.2.8 Working with French-speaking countries⁹

There is a challenge for PILN to meet the needs of French-speaking countries where a number of the potential participants do not speak English. New Caledonia and French Polynesia are currently PILN members but not operating with clear teams. Each strongly rejects the idea of having a separate sub-regional coordinator covering French-speaking countries which would only increase their isolation. Clearly having a bilingual PILN coordinator might be one option in the future, or alternatively he or she will need to work very closely alongside bilingual participants in the countries. Translating key reports and communications into French is seen as important now.

Recommendation:

1. Ensure that key reports and other documentation are translated into French.

4.3 Issues for PILN to focus on:

One of the strengths of PILN is that it is participant-driven. This requires it to work on the issues that are identified as priorities by its participants. However it should not necessarily confine itself to these. Those who established the Micronesians in Nature Conservation network found that 80-90% of what leaders needed, they knew that they

⁹ Just a reminder that the word country is used in this report to denote separate countries, territories or states.

needed and asked for. The rest they did not know they needed and this became a major focus for the network. In other words the experts supporting the network identified important needs that the leaders did not.

This section thus examines a variety of issues that PILN should focus on and encourages the partners to prioritise these in a strategic way.

4.3.1 Generating more successful outcomes on the ground

This is arguably the highest priority and what PILN is all about. A network like this feeds on success and is now in a strong position to rapidly share successes around to see more people apply effective techniques to their own problems.

PILN has done much to make successful outcomes more likely: increasing staff skills, providing them with relevant information, developing realistic action plans and providing encouragement. It needs to further examine how to make these outcomes happen.

The idea of forming teams around issues may assist, particular if they can then operate on the ground. As an example, I have seen weed control projects in several countries where a relatively small number of small populations exist and eradication is feasible. Local staff are doing what they can to tackle these populations with limited time and resources however progress is slow. What appears to be needed is a 'big hit' - removing all the adults in populations for example. If a weed team could be put together using the experienced practitioners from several PILN teams, it could move from country to country to provide such hits. Local staff could then take responsibility for ongoing work on seedlings to finish the job in the example given and the team would be in regular contact to provide encouragement. Clearly the team moving around would provide training and skills sharing opportunities as it went. It has been identified that Hawaii could possibly help with a weed team and provide a small amount of funds to PILN for it.

The same idea could be applied to rat management, marine IS surveys and suchlike. Coordination of different teams could be shared around experts involved in the network rather than all being the responsibility of the coordinator. There's a similar 'hit squad' concept behind the 'Good Ship Restoration' idea discussed at the second annual meeting. Learning exchanges could be seen as miniature versions of this but they would be unlikely to have the same on-the-ground impact.

Recommendation:

1. PILN should continue to be outcome-focused and put particular emphasis on ensuring some more successes in the next few years.

4.3.2 Fostering 'champions'

A key concept for PILN has been supporting and encouraging 'champions' or 'spark plugs' – Pacific islanders who through their particular enthusiasm, skills and

leadership could inspire others and make more happen. The network was fortunate to have several such individuals involved in its formation but there do not seem to be obvious new ones coming through. It is suggested that specific thought be given by the coordinator and partners to identifying any potential new champions and quietly singling them out for particular support.

Recommendation:

1. Those running the network should seek to identify potential new champions who would benefit from particular support.

4.3.3 Actively seeking to recruit remaining countries

This has been identified as one of the next steps for PILN. Several more countries have expressed interest in joining and it is likely that all could be recruited over the next 2-3 years if particular effort was put into this area.

However this review indicates that it may be more important to consolidate what has already happened, to strengthen the countries currently involved, to work out how the network will operate and tighten its governance. This might be the focus for much of the next year after which recruiting new members would again become a priority.

New countries that wish to join should not be discouraged and their individuals should be added to the email circulation. But it could be indicated that the coordinator's current priorities are on strengthening the existing network so that it is of maximum benefit to new countries when they do join. Behind this suggestion is also the view that the countries that are not yet members are likely to be the least ready to join for various reasons, so it will require significantly more input from the coordinator to get them involved.

A particular effort might be made to establish or maintain such dialogue with Melanesian countries. Indeed there has been discussion about the coordinator and SPREP's ISO taking a lead with different countries as the latter carries out consultations for GEF-PAS in those countries that are in that invasives project. However PILN's staff capacity is not the only issue here and its membership system needs review before further recruitment as discussed in section 4.1.1.

Recommendation:

1. PILN should put less priority on recruiting more countries over the next year and more on consolidation and improving its operation, unless the coordinator shares the recruitment role
2. PILN also needs to review its membership system before actively recruiting more countries.

4.3.4 Focus on implementation of the Regional Guidelines

It has been suggested that future PILN activities would focus on local, national and international collaboration to implement the new *Guidelines for Invasive Species Management in the Pacific*. These Guidelines have recently been released as a draft for endorsement by SPREP and SPC. They are intended to facilitate prioritisation by countries, rather than trying to set priorities and establish a programme from the outside. Thus national invasive species committees and the agencies with responsibilities in this area will be setting their own national priorities but using the guidelines to check that they are addressing all the necessary parts of the issue. PILN teams could then focus on those priorities where they can make the most difference.

Recommendation:

1. Countries should use the Guidelines to check that they are addressing all the different areas necessary to manage invasives. Implementing the Guidelines at the national level will largely mean implementing national priorities so it will not significantly change the way PILN operates.

4.3.5 Increasing inter-agency cooperation

This was one of the aims of PILN from the outset, recognising in particular the roles that environmental and agricultural agencies need to play and that cooperation between them was typically limited.

While several partner representatives identified it as a strength of PILN - the partnership may have improved cooperation at the regional level - they also identified it as a future challenge. Country participants did not mention the issue. The team analysis (section 4.1.3) showed that few [? Number] countries had the key agencies of environment, agriculture and quarantine in their team. There is also limited involvement of NGO's or the private sector.

PILN identified biosecurity as one of its potential priority areas. If PILN is going to make a significant contribution here it is suggested that all teams without them should be specifically encouraged to bring the three agencies identified into their teams. Working on biosecurity would clearly mean working closely with SPC which could strengthen the relationship with SPREP if the coordinator is housed there for the longer-term. There would need to be clarification on what PILN's role was, advocacy or facilitation or both.

4.3.6 Investigating communication alternatives

One respondent has suggested that PILN might be well-placed to consider alternative means of network communication. Clearly face to face meetings have proved very valuable during the pilot phase and the coordinator country visits have stimulated significant activity. However with increasing travel costs emphasis may need to be placed on other methods. Email is obviously a key method and video conferencing

and web-based phone systems that allow callers to see it each other might offer alternatives. Meetings could be held in regional hubs and then linked together (at areas with video conferencing facilities) to the larger network for sharing. How relevant these would be when a number of PILN members do not have ready access to a computer is questionable. However it might be possible to secure a grant for someone to investigate this.

4.3.7 Increasing public awareness

PILN has already placed some emphasis on this following its first annual meeting and the RARE Center's social marketing course was one opportunity created for members. Respondents saw this as continuing to be very important and two themes might be emphasised – the potential costs of IS becoming established and the fact that we can increasingly do something about those already present. Sharing success stories is a key element in the latter.

5. The Wider Picture

5.1 *PILN and PII*

5.1.1 Merging partnerships or programmes

A review of the PII conducted on behalf of NZAID in Feb/March 2007 considered the issue of the merging of PII and PILN partnerships and also ways to increase Pacific ownership of the Initiative.

This review found a significant level of support for the idea of merging the two partnerships, indeed this has been discussed by both. PILN and PII have 6 agencies in common as partners/collaborators: ISSG, SPREP, SPC, CI, TNC and Birdlife International and the same individual generally represents these agencies in each partnership. In addition PII has NZAID, its primary funder as a partner, and PILN has USP, USFS and OERC as partners and NPAS as a collaborator. This merging is to be discussed at the back-to-back partners meetings for PILN and PII later this year

Merging of the partnerships is clearly considered distinct from merging the two programmes and respondents generally consider that the latter requires a lot more time and analysis. PII has a further two years to run on its current funding arrangement between NZAID and the University of Auckland, NZ. PILN has a further one-year's funding for coordination from TNC. Merging of the two programmes is thus something that can be investigated over the next year or so.

The following points suggest that the logic for merging the partnerships is strong.

- Many of the same agencies and individuals are involved in each partnership
- Several partner representatives complain of having to spend too much time on the two partnerships – attending meetings, participating in conference calls. Combining into one would reduce this.

- There is clearly a tension in the operation of the two programmes and some confusion about their roles at country level. A single overseeing partnership could reduce this.
- Investigating the merging of the two programmes or increasing their close collaboration has been recommended and a single partnership could help facilitate this.
- Both programmes have identified concerns about the workings of their partnership and their governance. Sorting this out for a single partnership would be more cost-effective than doing it for two.

5.1.2 Role clarity and cooperation

My assessment is that in the initial stages both PILN and PII have been trying to prove their worth and thus there has been some competition between the two both regionally and nationally. Following the positive review of PII in 2007 and the endorsement of PILN contained in this review (if accepted by the partners) I consider both to now be established and that future management of invasives in the region requires the inputs and support that both provide.

However some further clarification of roles and closer cooperation seems to be required for both to contribute fully. One apparent overlap is with in-country on-the-ground projects. This is a major focus of the PII through its objective ‘to reduce negative impacts of IAS primarily by managing them at selected demonstration projects in PICTs’. There has been a feeling within PII that this was not a focus for PILN. However at the outset of PILN it was specified that country teams were expected to be working on at least one nominated on-the-ground project as well as one more strategic one. PILN expected to provide technical support and advice to on-the-ground projects being worked on by its teams from within its network and partnership, in the same way that PII expected to do so for the demonstration projects it supported.

PILN and PII need to work out more clearly how they operate together within the same country or how they approach different countries. This will remove any confusion at the country level.

Recommendations:

1. Continue discussion about the merging of PILN and PII partnerships
2. Continue to work with PII to clarify how the two organisations can operate in a complementary way at the country level.

5.2 Relationship with the Pacific Ant Prevention Programme (PAPP)

The PAPP was initiated in 2002 by the ISSG assisted by the Pacific Invasives Ant Group with the goal: *“To prevent RIFA and other invasive ant species with economic,*

environmental and/or social impacts, entering and establishing in or spreading between (or within) countries of the Pacific Region.” It was coordinated initially by Souad Boudjelas (ISSG & PII) until a full-time coordinator was appointed for one year in. Currently SPC is hosting PAPP and Warea Orapa is acting as ‘caretaker’ until funds are found for a new full-time coordinator. PII continues to provide support to SPC in relation to PAPP, is on its Technical Advisory Group, promotes PAPP to funders and raises awareness of invasive ant impacts.

Noting that several participants are encouraging PILN to consider invasive invertebrates, particularly ants, as a priority project, opportunities to work with or assist PAPP could be investigated. If PAPP obtains the funds for a coordinator then perhaps he or she could usefully work through PILN teams in some countries. If PAPP struggles to obtain independent ongoing funding, then perhaps discussion is needed between other agencies working on IS including PILN on how the activities of the programme can best be supported using existing resources. Sharing a position that included some sub-regional role for PILN might be a possibility.

Recommendation:

1. Assess how PILN can best work with PII, SPC, SPREP to assist PAPP if it continues to have difficulties securing ongoing funding.

5.3 SPREP, SPC, PILN and PII – The Invasives Alliance?

There has already been some discussion about these four entities forming an Invasives Alliance for the Pacific.

SPREP and SPC are the two agencies with the mandate from the PICT’s to provide leadership on invasive species issues. My assessment is that co-operation between the two has increased in the past few years assisted by the presence of PILN and PII bringing the two together in the two partnerships. However more is needed if the rapid progress necessary to win the battle against invasives is to be achieved.

PILN and PII could then potentially work underneath a SPREP-SPC umbrella to assist at a more operational level.

The contributions of other agencies and their linkages to the ‘alliance’ should not be difficult to define. In terms of contribution, some might primarily be funders or suppliers of technical support or information, or educational providers, or links to other regions and global issues. Their linkages might come through being partners alongside SPREP and SPC overseeing PILN and PII. Two respondents have pointed out that agencies need to put more thought into who is best placed to undertake a certain task. There are examples where funds have been used to bring in outside expertise when that same expertise exists within a partnership in an agency not given the opportunity to contribute.

Two questions could then be asked: What resources and positions are needed to make this alliance function to maximum effect? What would be the ideal country structure to engage with the alliance? Answering these is clearly beyond the scope and

resources of the present review. However there are clearly some significant funding opportunities coming up which can be used to try and set up an effective alliance and country structures. Those working on projects such as the GEF-PAS invasives one, CEPF Micronesia/Polynesia and European Union support for SPC are encouraged to work closely together with this goal in mind.

Recommendation:

1. More work should be done on the concept of an Invasives Alliance for the Pacific and on how it might be structured and funded. There seems no better time to do this now that SPREP and SPC are starting to work more closely together and both PILN and PII have proven their worth.

6. Influence on the further use of peer-learning networks

This section looks at whether the success of PILN has led to peer-learning networks being considered for us in other conservation programmes in the Pacific or elsewhere.

PILN has already been adopted as a model to be considered for use within other programmes at SPREP. The country team approach seems to be the element of PILN being looked at the most. Climate Change, Waste Management, Environmental Impact Assessment and Integrated Coastal management programmes have all considered that they could learn from PILN and adapt some of its approaches. This question within the TOR was not addressed in detail as others were seen as more important to PILN itself.

At the recent Conference of the Parties (COP9) for the Convention on Biological Diversity, both the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the Pacific Island Countries recognised the value of the PILN (annex 5). The former identified PILN as *‘an important model (that) could be expanded and adapted to other SIDS regions’* and the latter stated that *‘it has proven to be an effective example for invasive species management and should serve as a model for other components of the Program of Work on Island Biodiversity’*.

There has also been interest from other regions in developing a similar invasives network, e.g. the Caribbean. This review would place emphasis on improving the way that PILN operates first, strengthening the partnership and resolving issues around country membership and projects, before spending effort on this. There would then be a fully-defined model that could be picked up elsewhere. If partners agree that the local emphasis needs to be maintained for now, the message could go out to other regions that assistance is on the way but just not yet.

However enough is known at this point to say that the learning network model has wide applicability even if the optimum way to operate it for invasive species is not yet fully defined.

I personally consider PILN to be in a similar situation to the PII in this respect. The PII has been developed as the first example of a worldwide Cooperative Islands Initiative and the demonstration project concept is considered a strong one. But PII partners were cautious about its team spending much time on fostering uptake elsewhere until more on-the-ground outcomes were achieved in the Pacific. PILN too is a strong concept but needs to see more successful national projects before it can divert much energy to spreading the message more widely. Indeed it may be that the role of ‘outscaling’ is best taken up by partners. Two to three years has been enough to see both PILN and PII established and each should now be in a position to see those outcomes happen.

7. Concluding comments

The two-year pilot programme of PILN has proved very successful and achieved more than expected. Clearly the network is valuable and should continue. Having a full-time, independent coordinator who was able to travel for face-to-face meetings throughout the region was its key strength. The skills and experience of the current coordinator, Jill Key, were a significant factor in its success.

The 1-year further funding secured for the coordinator by TNC provides an opportunity for a ‘transition year’ in which the long term future and structure of the network should be secured.

It is suggested that this year is one of consolidation and re-focussing. The network has expanded very fast and also broadened its approach. Several countries have joined the network without going through a formal process and forming teams, and in-country work has partly moved away from specific projects to strategic action planning. There is a danger that PILN is trying to assist with all the issues faced by everyone and continuing along this track could see the network lose its niche and identity. This also increases overlap with other agencies and programmes. While the ultimate goal might be for the network to disappear and become the way that everyone operates, we are clearly a long way from that point. Some re-focussing is thus needed while at the same time retaining some flexibility.

A key to PILN is that it is participant-driven. Though partners and the coordinator should take the lead in considering many of the recommendations in this review as they are strategic in nature, the views of the participants will also be critical. Ultimately it is up to PILN as a whole to determine how it wishes to operate and how structured it should be.

Celebrate!

PILN should celebrate its success and the positive outcomes of its pilot phase. The network has brought those addressing invasive species in Pacific Island countries together. Now is a time to hear their voices raised in laughter and song.

8. Tabulated summary of results

Mission & Goals	
Goal 1 – strengthening skills	Several training courses and learning exchanges delivered – too early to fully assess their benefits
Goal 2 – on the ground action and sharing experiences	Much successful sharing of experiences and skills – outcomes at ground level less clear but 2-years is too short a time for this.
Goal 3 – work on high priority national issues	Achieved for all teams. Founding teams worked on strategic and on-the-ground projects, those joining in year 2 typically focussed on planning.
Goal 4 – addressing regional issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine invasives • Biosecurity • Weed management • Rat management 	<p>Significant contribution – led to organisation of workshops, training and funding proposals</p> <p>Some contribution</p> <p>Significant contribution – training, exchanges, surveys, in-country action</p> <p>Significant contribution – training, in-country action</p>
Other assessments	
Stakeholder satisfaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants • Partners & Collaborators • Funders 	<p>High level of satisfaction</p> <p>High level of satisfaction</p> <p>High level of satisfaction</p>
Network growth	Significant achievement – 14 countries involved
Acceleration of action	Some achievement but hard to assess
Relationships	Significant achievement
Outscaling	Good transfers of lessons particular with weed and rat management
Upscaling	Little evidence of achievement
Leverage	Several specific achievements. PILN being adopted as a model more widely and praised at COP9 of CBD.

Acknowledgements

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This review was funded by Le Fonds Pacifique. I thank SPREP administration staff particularly Theresa Fruean-Afa for efficient processing of contractual and financial matters.

It has been a privilege to be able to present this brief assessment of PILN. I hope that it helps this great concept to secure its long-term future and play its part in beating back the tide of invasives that threatens the region and its people.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR

Pacific Invasives Learning Network Review

The external review is the first part of a two-step process: it will examine what the network has achieved during the pilot programme, and its results will contribute to the next step, discussions among the partners on how the network should move ahead post-pilot.

PILN is in the second year of a 2-year pilot programme, during which the main activity has been to build the network. PILN is at a critical point in its development and it is an appropriate time to examine the networks successes and failures, in order to:

- Determine whether PILN has been successful and outline what aspects of PILN should be replicated in establishing other learning networks in the Pacific region;
- Define the role of PILN in relation to that of SPREP, SPC and the PII partnership within the framework of the Regional Invasive Species Strategy;
- Source funding for the post-pilot phase, where the network is expected to focus on expansion and consolidation.

Review objective:

- Determine if PILN is fulfilling its mission for the participants, for the partners and for close collaborators.
- Determine if the PILN structure is a good model
- Determine what elements of PILN are replicable for other capacity building activities.

Tasks

Recommendations for the functioning of the PILN network and partnership will be presented, based on the following 5 thematic areas:

1. Assess the effectiveness of the networks strategies in terms of the goals
 - Progress against PILN goals & milestones
 - Were the goals & objectives of the pilot phase appropriate?
 - Were the goals & objectives of the pilot phase achieved?
 - What was the level of satisfaction of key stakeholders?
 - PILN team members
 - Other stakeholders in-country (eg, members of national invasive species committees)
 - Partners and donors
 - How did this differ for members of the initial founding teams and the new teams?
 - Do participants feel that they drive the network?
- Did the PILN help accelerate conservation?
 - Peer learning (learning exchanges)
 - Bringing the right people together periodically (annual meetings)
 - Workshops

- Coordinator activities
 - Relationship with other institutions and groups:
 - How has PILN progressed invasive species action in the region along with other institutions and groups working on invasive species?
 - Is the current relationship appropriate and productive and how could it be improved?
 - Does the PILN network adequately transfer skills between these groups and PILN teams?
 - Have lessons learned in invasive species management been successfully applied at a wider scale or to new areas (outscaling)?
 - Have lessons learned been successfully transferred from field level to decision-making level (upscaling)?
 - Did the activities lead to the outcomes expected?
 - What are the strengths & weaknesses of PILN?
2. Has PILN had “leverage”?
- What follow-on activities, projects or programs have resulted from PILN?
 - What influence has PILN had on the use of peer learning networks for conservation?
 - In the Pacific
 - Elsewhere
3. Assess the adequacy of the PILN secretariat
- The coordinators role
 - Staffing
 - The partners roles
 - Are the right partners present?
 - Are the right representatives of the partners involved?
 - Institutional structure
 - Effectiveness of the location of the coordinator at SPREP, and role there.
 - Effectiveness of the steering committee
4. Continuity & Expansion strategy
- What should be the criteria for PILN membership? – individuals, teams, organizations, geographic extent
 - What should be the expectations/commitments of PILN members? (e.g. frequency of retreats, progress on self-identified goals, self-assessments, exchanges, site monitoring, other?)
 - What priority issues has PILN helped with in the past?
 - What are the priority issues that PILN should help with in the future (can be more of the same or different)?
 - What priority issues is PILN not well-placed to help with, and what issues should it pass to other invasive species initiatives?
5. Identify specific lessons that can be learned from this project
- What worked well and PILN should do again?
 - What should PILN do differently?

- The consultant will also be expected to determine what elements of PILN are replicable for other similar capacity building initiatives.

Timeline and deliverables

The following milestones and deliverables will be used to track progress on this contract.

By Early May 2008

- Background literature and familiarisation complete.
- Programme of work agreed with supervisory team, including 3 country visits and telephone and email consultations with PILN partners and teams.
- Consultations with PILN Partners completed
- Consultations with PILN teams completed
- Country visits initiated
- Final consultations
- Country visits completed
- Draft report presented to supervisory team
- Final report completed.

Annex 2: Schedule

29 April – 3 May Fiji

Partner and Collaborator meetings:

- SPC (Aleki Warea Orapa, Sada Lal)
- University of South Pacific (Randy Thaman, Marika Tuiwawa)
- Birdlife International (Don Stewart, Steve Cranwell).

Fiji National Invasives Group meeting

4-10 May Samoa

Partner meetings:

- SPREP (Vitolio Lui, Stuart Chape, Frank Wickham, Alan Tye, Kate Brown, Ana Tiraa)
- Conservation International (James Atherton)

Coordinator meetings (Jill Key)

Samoa National Invasives Meeting

8 May American Samoa

Collaborator meeting:

- National Park of American Samoa (Peter Craig, Tavita Togia)

Meeting of American Samoa Invasive Species Task Team (ASIST)

18 May Guam

Evening meeting with PILN team leader in transit to Micronesia cancelled following plane breakdown in Honolulu.

20-21 May Kosrae

- Meeting of Kosrae Invasive Species Taskforce
- Meeting with PILN team members
- Visit to PILN team project sites

Pohnpei

Meeting with PILN team and taskforce members cancelled after airport closed for the week after a plane went off /blocked the runway.

23 May Auckland, NZ

- Partner meeting ISSG (Maj de Poorter)
- Collaborator meeting PII (Souad Boudjelas, Bill Nagle)

Annex 3: Survey of PILN partners & close collaborators:

Interviews were conducted with individuals from the following agencies (F denotes face-to-face, T by telephone, E by email and P the PILN representative where one has been identified):

Partners

SPC – F - Aleki Sisifa, Warea Orapa (P), Sada Lal
USP – F – Randy Thaman, Marika Tuiwawa, T – Craig Morley (P formerly)
SPREP – F – Vitolio Liu, Stuart Chape (P), Frank Wickham, Alan Tye, Kate Brown, Ana Tiraa, Anthony Talouli
CI – F – James Atherton
TNC – T – Audrey Newman
USFS – T – Anne Marie LaRosa
ISSG – F – Maj de Poorter, E – Michael Browne
OERC

Collaborators

Birdlife International – F - Don Stewart, Steve Cranwell (P)
National Park of American Samoa – F - Tavita Togia (P), Peter Craig
Pacific Invasives Initiative – F - Souad Boudjelas (P), Bill Nagle, T – Alan Saunders

Interviews were largely based on a questionnaire (Annex 3). Results were as follows:

Mission and Goals of PILN

Do you consider that the mission and goals of the pilot phase were appropriate?

All respondents answered ‘yes’ to this. However two additional goals were suggested:

- Financial and institutional foundations of PILN established
- External links to the Network fostered

It was noted that the network has a participant-driven emphasis so not all the goals were addressed equally.

Has PILN accelerated invasive species management in the region? If Yes, please give examples.

The answer was generally ‘yes’ but it was recognised that there was no pre-PILN baseline and several different invasive species initiatives were happening around the same time (e.g. PII, CEPF funding round for invasives) and it was hard to separate the specific achievements of PILN. Two years was also considered a very short time and like any new idea PILN started on a slow upward curve but was now well placed to achieve greater acceleration.

Acceleration was noted in the raising of interest in the issue, an increasing enthusiasm that something ‘could be done’, and in some local capacity and information. It was considered that ‘a remarkable job had been done in pulling team together and raising awareness in only two years’.

What is your agency's level of satisfaction with PILN? (Very satisfied, Satisfied, Not very satisfied, Not satisfied at all).

Eight agency respondents reported that they were 'very satisfied' with PILN and 4 were 'satisfied' (though some noted that they could not answer for their agency as a whole). One made a distinction between being 'very satisfied' with the network but 'not very satisfied' with the partnership.

What do you see as the Strengths of the network? Please list at least three.

The following were identified (grouped in order of the number of respondents who mentioned them):

Nine responses:

- Full-time coordinator – six also commented on the particular strengths of the current coordinator

Four responses:

- A network of individuals to engage with allowing rapid dissemination of information
- Partnership – links to partner expertise, provides a consistent inter-agency approach and avoids duplication

Three responses

- Raised awareness of invasives issues in countries
- Team and in-country commitment
- Cross-sectoral approach to management of invasives in country

Two responses:

- Good political buy-in

One response:

- Facilitation of team learning
- Neutral mandate – non-judgemental
- Participant driven
- Issue focussed and small
- Opportunity for skills sharing
- Based in the region
- Housed at SPREP so trusted by countries
- Complementary role of Invasive Species Officer at SPREP
- Lean with money
- Face to face meetings
- Source of information for students
- The people who initially shaped it
- The presence of 'champions'
- The variety of people involved

What are the main Weaknesses or Challenges to greater progress? (please list at least three).

Weaknesses

The following were identified (grouped in order of the number of respondents who mentioned them):

Nine responses:

- Lack of consistent funding (for running PILN first and for in-country operations second) – also ties into the cost of operating in the region
- Lack of buy-in by key agencies (SPREP, SPC) and partners, poor institutional framework, ill-defined responsibilities. (One respondent noted that PILN had not generally been managed ‘up’ successfully within agencies so senior management support was not strong)

Five responses:

- Country teams (issues raised were turnover of members, composition – lack of multi-agency involvement, inability (of countries) to maintain engagement, lack of influence members have in-country, concern about how they are working in relation to PII projects)

Two responses:

- Coordination capacity

Challenges

The main challenges identified were:

- Consistency of staffing (4 responses) and funding (2)
- Recognition and political support at regional & national level (3)
- Inter-agency partnership and cooperation (including with PII) (3)
- Dependence on coordinator and countries needing to take more responsibility (2)

Individuals also identified:

- Linking English and French-speaking countries
- Balancing addressing needs and keeping partnership happy
- Coordinating across many initiatives & funding
- Maintaining momentum
- Expanded too fast
- High cost of working in the region

Has PILN had leverage? Have any follow-on activities occurred involving your agency as a result of PILN?

Partnership

Do you favour PILN continuing to be a partnership? Please give reasons.

Current Partners have successfully seen PILN through from a concept to a two-year pilot programme. Do you see your agency continuing to play a role at ‘partner’ level if PILN becomes an ongoing programme and the partnership model retained?

Are there any key agencies that you work with on invasive species issues in the region that are not Partners or Collaborators with PILN that perhaps should be?

Do you feel that any of the current Partners or Collaborators may be inappropriate for the next phase of PILN as they are only peripherally involved in IAS work in the region?

All felt that PILN should continue to be a partnership

All current partners wished to continue in this role in the next phase of PILN (Several questioned whether OERC as a national-agency should be a ‘partner’ and this was apparently questioned by some other countries on joining – may be better out.)

The distinction between Partners and Close Collaborators was unclear and it was suggested that Birdlife might become a partner.

Other agencies suggested as possible Partners were:

- IUCN Oceania
- US Fish & Wildlife
- Landcare Research, NZ
- Regional education provider – e.g. South Pacific Board of Education Assessment
- South Pacific Tourism Organisation
- National Trust (Fiji, NZ, Australia)
- Island Conservation

No respondent considered that any of the current partners would be inappropriate for the next phase of PILN.

Representation of partners

Does the role representing (your agency) sit with the position you occupy or does it sit with you as a result of your individual interest and expertise? If the latter, which would be the appropriate position in your agency to represent it in PILN if you were to move on? Has the same representative been able to participate in most PILN meetings?

Coordinator

Does a single position coordinating the Network work effectively for your agency? Do you obtain the information you need? Can you access the Network in a timely manner if you need to do so?

All respondents replied ‘yes’ to these.

At the end of a 5-year expansion phase it is expected that all 22 countries, states & territories in the Pacific will be actively using the Network. Could the Network as currently set up with a single coordinator support 22 teams if all wished to join and met the criteria?

Nine respondents considered this would not be workable but three thought it would be based on some changes to the coordinator role and strong country teams increasingly needing less support.

Do you support the Coordinator continuing to be based at SPREP? If yes, please record why.

All but one respondent said 'yes' – it did not matter to one. However several made their answer dependent on SPREP itself supporting this fully.

The following reasons were given for this decision:

- Comprehensive country membership
- Invasive Species Officer position there
- Environmental mandate and focus
- Link to Action Strategy for Nature Conservation and Regional Invasive Species Guidelines & Action Plan
- One of the two organisations that 'called for' PILN
- Pacific-based regional organisation

There was some comment that SPC was more engaged in work on the ground in countries and if a technical position was to be created for PILN it should be based there.

A small 4-person steering committee was established at the outset largely to support the coordinator but it appears to have only 'met' once. Was your agency represented on the Steering Committee? Do you consider this committee should be re-established?

Few respondents were clear who was on the Steering Committee and what its role was. However those involved did see value in it being re-established/re-energised.

Team Criteria

Teams were originally to be selected according to strict criteria as set out below. However some countries have joined PILN without teams meeting these criteria. This section explores this issue.

The following are the current team criteria:

- ***At least one team from each of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) regions (Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia) plus Hawaii.***
- ***Each team will be from a single political entity (nation, territory or state) or archipelago.***
- ***Each team will include 3-5 individuals who actively participate in the Network on behalf of their country and work closely with larger invasive species committees back home.***

- *Teams will be selected based on their members' credentials, including long-term commitment to invasive species work and/or conservation in their nation, cultural understanding, willingness to commit time to network activities, and potential to act as "spark plugs" and innovators to greatly increase invasive species management and prevention in their nations.*
- *Participating teams will determine the invasive species issues and projects that they will use the network to help them achieve in their island homes. It is envisaged that most teams will work on two projects, one large-scale or strategic in nature (e.g. policy, public awareness, planning) and one demonstration project in the field (marine, freshwater or terrestrial).*
- *Teams will include agencies responsible for agriculture, international trade and other economic interests as well as conservation and natural resource management.*

Do you think that these criteria are appropriate for the continuation of PILN?

If so, do you consider that there should be some tightening of the Network so that countries only become formal members if they have a team that meets these criteria?

Yes/No.

Alternatively, are you happy with the approach that has seen some countries join on the basis of having a group or committee working on invasive species and keen to connect to PILN (e.g. Fiji, Hawaii)? Yes/No.

Please give reasons for your answers

Priority issues for PILN to work on.

PILN has worked on the following priority regional issues up to now (e.g. subject of separate technical sessions at Moorea meeting):

- *Marine invasive species*
- *Biosecurity*
- *Weed management*
- *Rat management*

What do you think are the priority issues that PILN should help with in future? These same ones? Should some of these be dropped? Should others be added?

Has PILN made a significant contribution to managing these issues? Please answer Yes, No to each and give reasons, or 'Don't Know' if not involved in that area:

Marine invasive species Yes – 5, no – 1, don't know - 13

Biosecurity: Yes – 7, little evidence – 1, don't know - 8

Weed: Yes – 9, don't know - 6

Rat: Yes – 10, don't know – 3.

Can you identify any priority issues that you do not think PILN is well placed to deal with that should be left to others?

Future staffing

Some ideas have been discussed or put forward for future staffing of the Network.

These include:

- 1. having 3 sub-regional coordinators covering Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia*
- 2. A 3-position support team consisting of Coordinator, Invasive Species (IS) Planning Adviser, IS Funding Adviser*
- 3. The tasks of supporting PILN being absorbed into existing or new CROP agency positions (please specify which agency – might be more than one)*

Note: These 3 alternatives were presented in initial versions of the questionnaire. However the third was later spilt into two, either absorbing the tasks of PILN into existing positions or creating new positions in these agencies for PILN. This allowed discussion of making the coordinator position a core position rather than a contractor housed at SPREP as at present.

Which option or combination of options do you favour or do you have alternative suggestions? Please give your reasons.

These questions lead to significant discussions and it would take up too much space to record each. The answers were used to write the discussion in section 4.2.7.

Annex 4: Survey of country participants

A slightly different questionnaire was used for country participants and is presented along with its results here. Responses were received from 11 individuals by email and the issues discussed with another 6 at team meetings. One individual provided a brief response when three questions were sent to several non-respondents by email

A4.1 Questionnaire responses

Question 1 & 2: These took the possible activities and benefits identified at the start of PILN and asked which had occurred.

1. Has your country team worked with PILN on any of these?

- *Developing an IAS strategy* Guam, Kosrae, Pohnpei, French Polynesia, Samoa, New Caledonia
- *Obtaining funding for IAS management* Kosrae, New Caledonia
- *Strengthening border control and quarantine* Pohnpei, Hawaii, Samoa
- *Developing early detection and response capability* Pohnpei, Hawaii
- *Developing a risk assessment & permitting system for intentional introductions of new species* Pohnpei, New Caledonia
- *Planning and carrying out eradication programmes* Guam, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Samoa

- *Planning and carrying out control programmes* Guam, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Samoa
- *Developing lists of IAS posing the greatest threat to a country* Pohnpei, Samoa
- *Developing effective collaboration between different agencies and stakeholders* Guam, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Hawaii, Samoa, New Caledonia
- *Developing education & public awareness programmes* Kosrae, Pohnpei, Samoa

2. Have you or your country team received any of the following possible benefits from being part of PILN?

- *Making you feel part of a regional network of agencies and professionals working on invasive species in the Pacific* Guam, Kosrae, Pohnpei, French Polynesia, Hawaii, Samoa, New Caledonia
- *Attending meetings or workshops with other Pacific teams to work on priority needs* Guam, Kosrae, Pohnpei, French Polynesia, Hawaii, Samoa, New Caledonia
- *Learning exchanges with other Pacific island programs* Guam, Pohnpei, French Polynesia, Hawaii, Samoa, New Caledonia
- *Training courses or technical assistance specifically designed to meet your needs* Guam, Kosrae, Samoa
- *Advice on fund-raising* Pohnpei, Samoa, New Caledonia
- *Access to experts for advice or technical assistance* Guam, Kosrae, Pohnpei, French Polynesia, Hawaii, Samoa, New Caledonia
- *Access to international information (e.g. databases) and techniques* Guam, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Samoa, New Caledonia
- *Assistance with inter-agency collaboration in your country* Kosrae, Samoa
- *Advice on the best way to carry out different activities received from others in the network* Pohnpei, Samoa, New Caledonia

2.2 Is PILN successful and achieving its mission and goals?

How successful do you think PILN is overall? Very successful (6) Successful (5) Fairly successful (1) Not successful at all (0)

Some comments: PILN has been the most effective and well-organised network my Organisation has ever been involved with

‘...for all the reasons listed above (Q1&2); meetings to develop facilitation skills, coordinator visits for objective discussion and ideas

Now a group of experts at your fingertips – you email out a question and up with a great discussion.

Coordinator has been helpful – particularly through visits

Coordinator has made the link between people from the Pacific – we can understand problems at Pacific scale

Has brought together many of the region’s most serious and dedicated conservationists and practitioners of IS management

Created more awareness and encouraged Pacific Islanders to do more work on IS.
Moorea meeting an important event for French Polynesia.

PILN not so visible here except for those who work online and access website
Benefits indirect so far.

Critical in timing with expanded global trade and now countries can access
information when needed.

***Has PILN helped you to carry out your work on invasive species more effectively?
Yes (7), No (1), Not sure (4). If your answer is yes, can you say how it has helped?***

Comments:

- Helped my organisation build and strengthen local partners, helped in the establishment of our IS Task Force – now able to work collaboratively with local and foreign partners, increased capacity and able to learn and share information
- In touch with experts from overseas so built up my network
- Only say ‘no’ as I don’t do the work myself.
- Helpful information
- Making the connections
- Made good contacts resulting in good information exchange
- Hard to quantify benefits except participants feel more connected to the larger community and keep up morale by hearing about successes elsewhere
- Information on successful actions has been used by us on several species
- Used to source specific information for management of a species here

How successful has PILN been at increasing the amount of work on invasive species in your country? Very successful (1), Successful (4), Fairly successful (5), Not successful at all (2) Please give some examples to support your answer:

Comments

Helped us to develop our IS SAP which means our invasives work is more focused and increased to achieve successful results

Colleagues have talked about work happening in other countries

PILN born at the right time for our country

Progress made towards completion of national IS Action Plan, prioritisation and project development

A lot already happening and not necessarily anything new due to PILN but current programs have benefited

Passing of one emergency ban had something to do with PILN

Helped to develop an IAS strategy

Supported our activities and provided encouragement

Not resulted in significant changes in the management of IS here

My work load is already at maximum capacity

***How successful has PILN been at increasing the cooperation between different organisations working on invasive species in your country?
Very successful (1), Successful (5), Fairly successful (3), Not successful at all (2)***

Please give some examples to support your answer:

Comments

We now have a SAP that brings all resource management agencies together to share roles and strengthen our collaboration – more than seven agencies now actively working on IS management.

IAS strategy set up with representatives of different Govt. agencies

Key Ministries more involved in our invasives task team

PILN meeting at Palau brought us together as a group.

Met people from different organisations at PILN meetings and kept in contact.

Was just our organisation – now the mayors (community leaders) are involved.

Seen no evidence of this.

Environmental agency are now always working with quarantine and fisheries

Already happening so not a reflection on PILN

What do you see as the Strengths of the network? Please list at least three

Four responses:

- Information sharing
- Meetings (also served to build relationships)

Three responses:

- Coordinator
- Regional workshops
- The network (via email, large & friendly)

Two responses:

- Hearing of successes (of teams, of control methods)

Single responses (some could be grouped with above though expressed differently)

- Capacity building (exchanges, training, workshops)
- Presence & image
- Provided valuable activities
- Increased collaborative efforts
- Pacific Islander based
- Involves regional and international level
- Bringing managers, researchers, policy makers, educators, NGO's and communities together
- Great tool to assist even in small countries
- Morale boost
- Prevention in other countries reduces risks here
- Rapid response
- Increased awareness

What do you see as the Weaknesses of the network? Please list at least three

Five responses:

- Limited funding, including the coordinator having to chase this

Two responses

- Lack of staff

Single response

- Meetings are expensive and require much organisation
- As network grows meetings will be less personal and benefits decline
- Long term commitment
- Unable to strengthen political will of countries
- Insufficient support from partners especially SPREP
- Important Melanesian countries not represented
- Most unaware of its services
- Should be regular visits to smaller countries
- Need more countries involved
- Should be training in region for field personnel
- May not result in more resources on the ground
- People attending may not be decision-makers for funds
- Cannot think of any
- Countries separated by distance
- Two languages in region

What are the two main Challenges to greater progress? (Please list at least two)

Funding (6)

Staff Capacity (2)

Increasing no. of teams without losing personal connectivity

Including most if not all countries

Remaining original and progressive

Keeping it going

Effective communication

Regional planning and collaboration

Public perception

Apathy and despair at size of problem and trying to solve the insolvable while ignoring the solvable

Time and energy

Transportation for exchanges within remote island nations

Key partner support

2.3 Is the PILN Structure a good one or can it be improved?

This section considers the current structure of PILN, the partnership, and the role of the coordinator based at SPREP.

Excellent structure (1 comment)

Do you support the network continuing to have a full-time coordinator? Yes (10)/No(0)

Please give some reasons for your answer

Should network continue more successful IS projects will be accomplished.
Maybe once initial set-up completed and funding secured may only need to be part-time
More than a full-time job already – more than enough to be done
Present structure of two positions good (coordinator and SPREP ISO)
Plane needs a pilot
Need for a regional agency to monitor, assess and provide recommendations on IS
Little will happen without stirring the pot
Assume coordinator is very busy
Need someone who will be there pushing and encouraging us and following up on activities to be completed

Do you agree that the coordinator should be based at SPREP? Yes (5) /No (0)/Don't Know (5). Please give some reasons for your answer

With SPREP all member countries feel they own the network – has the capacity to coordinate it.
Yes, if funding there – link with ISO good.
Might be better at SPC to avoid overlapping
Good for me as close to where I work
Coordinator needs to work closely with SPREP ISO and SPC plant and animal specialists wherever based
SPREP is well-established organisation and familiar with region's problems and structure
Proven reliable structure and access
SPREP has not been the best partner and if someone else can do it better I would support a shift

Do you think that PILN should remain a partnership (partners are listed on page1)? Yes (7)/No (0)/Don't know(3). Please give some reasons for your answer

Good from funding viewpoint
Interaction of partners adds diversity
Partnership OK if means adequate funding and good expertise but not if only a 'lobbying' thing
To share responsibilities in monitoring and coordinating activities in region
Good to have their expertise at meetings/activities/training
Important to keep network in the loop of other conservation agendas in the Pacific
No one agency is doing enough so it will always require strong partnerships and this could be developed further

2.4 Future of PILN

PILN has developed from having 6 founding teams in 2006 to 13 active teams today as demand for the network has grown. Countries that are not yet members of PILN are

expressing interest so further growth is expected. This section considers what might be required to support an expanding network and what issues should be its priorities.

Future staffing:

Some options have been discussed or put forward for future staffing of the Network. These include:

1. Continuing with a single coordinator, but making this a core position within a regional agency such as SPREP
2. Having 3 sub-regional coordinators covering Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia
3. Having a 3-position support team consisting of Coordinator, Invasive Species (IS) Planning Adviser, IS Funding Adviser
4. Having the tasks of supporting PILN being absorbed into existing positions at SPREP and/or SPC.

Which option or combination of options do you favour or do you have alternative suggestions? Please give your reasons. If the Coordinator is to become a core position in an Agency (option 1) should this be SPREP or SPC or another organisation (please identify it)? Please give your reasons

A wide range of views were obtained. The highest number (6) favoured the 3-person team though two of these saw a single coordinator as an alternative if there were insufficient funds or work. One favoured a 2-person team of coordinator and funding adviser. Three liked the sub-regional idea (reducing travel was one advantage) and two stated opposition to this as invasives were a Pacific-wide solution and this might create artificial barriers. There was support for both SPREP and SPC providing a core position for the coordinator though one felt that neither had shown the capacity to do this and an alternative like TNC, CI or IUCN might be better.

Priority issues:

PILN has worked on the following priority regional issues up to now (e.g. subject of separate technical sessions at Moorea meeting):

- ***Marine invasive species***
- ***Biosecurity***
- ***Weed management***
- ***Rat management***

What do you think are the priority issues that PILN should help with in future? These same ones? Should some of these be dropped? Should others be added?

Add:

Other invasive mammals and vertebrates (goats, pigs, birds (4 suggested birds), etc)

Ants and invasive invertebrates (2 suggested this)

Biocontrol (plant & animal)

Communication

Rapid Response

Has PILN made a significant contribution to managing these issues? Please answer Yes, No to each and give reasons, or 'Don't Know' if not involved in that area:

Marine invasive species Yes – 1, don't know - 7

Biosecurity: Yes – 3, don't know - 7

Weed: Yes – 6, don't know - 4

Rat: Yes – 6, don't know – 3

A4.2 Discussion in team meetings

A4.3 Brief 3-question response

Do you think PILN has been successful and why? Yes in terms of its objectives; helped in development of our National Invasives Strategy along with TNC, helpful in identifying funding opportunities.

How might PILN help your country in the future? Assisting us to build institutional and individual capacity to implement our strategy. Good opportunity to learn about technical assistance and training programmes

How can it best be structured to achieve this? While regional trainings and workshops are valuable, other options might be country exchange programmes and having an expert in-country for two years to train locals and assist with implementation.

Annex 5: Statements on Invasives from COP9 of CBD

The following statements were presented at the 9th Conference of the Parties (COP9) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in relation to the *In-Depth Review of Ongoing Work on Alien Species that Threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species*. References to PILN are highlighted in bold.

A5.1 Statement of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

On behalf of Small Island Developing States we would like to express our appreciation to the Secretariat for the work undertaken on the In-depth Review of Ongoing work on invasive alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species.

This issue is of particular interest to SIDs. We have much to offer in terms of experience in dealing with IAS and look forward to increased support for our actions especially in strengthening capacity to address the range of issues related to IAS.

As SIDS we also request financial support for more research on the interlinked issues of climate change and invasive alien species. This research should lead to increased action in mitigating potential adverse effects on biodiversity.

On the issue of pathways we would like to highlight the need to prioritize the development of guidance for specific priority pathways, for example hull fouling, aviation, tourist pathways to name a few.

In particular we believe that the expansion of current Pacific initiatives such as the Pacific Invasive Learning Network, a catalytic capacity building network for addressing invasives, which focuses on both strategic and practical action and sharing experiences between islands, is an important model and could be expanded and adapted to other SIDS regions.

We also welcome the various national and regional initiatives supported by the GEF including the CABI-GEF project “mitigating the threats of invasive alien species in the insular Caribbean.”

Finally we are pleased to recognize New Zealand’s efforts to expand the Cooperative Islands Initiative, and particularly welcome broadening this initiative from the Pacific to all SIDs.

Thank you chair.

A5.2 Statement of Pacific Island Countries

Thank you for the opportunity to take the floor on this issue.

Kiribati is making a statement on behalf of Pacific Island Countries.

I'd like to start by noting the importance that the Pacific Island Countries place on the issue of invasive alien species as they are by far the number one cause of species extinctions on islands and also have significant impacts on livelihoods and economic development.

Specifically, we are committed to implementing priorities within national, regional and sub-regional invasive species strategies as well as to priorities in our own national plans.

Regarding the draft decision, the Pacific Island Countries would like to make the following 8 points:

1. We support the development of a practical guide for the operationalization and implementation of past COP decisions and the Guiding Principles.
2. Regarding paragraph 2 on capacity needs, we would like to move beyond the identification of these needs and would request that the CBD Secretariat conduct an analysis of the resources and opportunities to meet these needs, which can be reported to countries and the donor community.
3. We support adoption of SBSTTA recommendation XIII/5 "Invasive Alien Species: Report on Consultations Regarding International Standards."
4. As a priority, we would like to stress the need to prioritize the development of guidance for specific priority pathways including: hull fouling, aviation, tourist pathways, plant/tree ornamentals and landscaping, and development assistance (as contained in Decision VIII/27); and to request the CBD Executive Secretary to liaise with relevant international agencies, and the private sectors including the IPPC, and other organizations to develop guidance in these areas and to report on progress at COP-10.
5. We would propose a new paragraph recognizing the importance of access to and availability of information for national implementation and the efforts of relevant regional, sub-regional and international initiatives.
6. We would like to highlight the need for research and action to address the intersection of climate change, land use change and invasive alien species, including efforts to ensure that climate change response efforts do not promote the use of and further introductions of invasive alien species;
7. Finally, we would like to highlight the importance of regional and sub-regional organizations and initiatives in supporting national efforts, particularly in the context of islands.
 - We would therefore like to welcome the offer of New Zealand to host an expert workshop on islands, invasive species and experiences with regional coordination efforts through the Cooperative Islands Initiative.
 - **The Pacific Invasives Learning Network has proven to be an effective example for invasive species management and should serve as a model for other components of the Program of Work on Island Biodiversity.**
8. We, the Pacific Island countries invite the donor community to invest in national, regional and sub-regional initiatives such as the PILN, PII,

Micronesian RISC which are effective at identifying national needs and assisting with regional and sub-regional coordination and implementation.

We are submitting suggested language on these points directly to the Secretariat.

Thank you for this opportunity to take the floor.

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