



How to Eradicate Rodents & Cats from Islands Training Course Kingdom of Tonga, Nuku'alofa, 11-15 June, 2012



Training Report

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Summary

A five-day training course was held in Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga, 11-15 June 2012.

The purpose of the course was to train participants on how to plan and implement rodent and cat eradication projects using the Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII) Resource Kit.

The course included classroom exercises and a field trip to the nearby Manima Island in Nuku'alofa lagoon.

Participants represented the Tongan Ministry of Environment and Climate Change; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Food and Fisheries; Ministry of Transport; and the Cook Islands' Te Ipukarea Society.

Introduction

Training Name	How to Eradicate Rodents and Cats on Islands
Location	Kingdom of Tonga, Nuku'alofa
Dates	11-15 June, 2012
Trainers	Dave Wallace (Facilitator, Stella Associates) Derek Brown (Subject Matter Expert [SME] Consultant) Souad Boudjelas (SME, PII) John Mather (Administration assistant and observer, PII)

PURPOSE OF TRAINING

The purpose of the training course was to train participants on how to plan and implement rodent and cat eradication projects using the PII Resource Kit, and specifically:

- Know the principles that underpin the Resource Kit
- Know the PII project process for an eradication project
- Know the reasons and value for each stage and step in the process
- Be able to use the Resource Kit to locate information and resources to assist participants to complete each step of the project process
- Know where further learning resources and support can be accessed
- Effectively and confidently plan and proceed with projects

TRAINING APPROACH

The training was facilitated by Dave Wallace, from Stella Associates (a training company from New Zealand), assisted by two SMEs; Souad Boudjelas, the Programme Manager from PII, and Derek Brown, a consultant. John Mather, who had recently joined the PII team, assisted with planning and course administration. The training made full use of the PII Resource Kit, and associated posters, videos and other learning aids. Course information was available through participants' access to an electronic version of the Resource Kit; a printed workbook; guidance on accessing the information; displays using a projector and screen to observe Resource Kit components; and regular progress check exercises.

The classroom learning was backed up by a site visit to a nearby island where the principles of the project feasibility study were demonstrated.

Venue

The training was undertaken at the Methodist Church hall, Vaha'akolo Road, Nuku'alofa. The Methodist Church administration staff were welcoming and helpful.



The training venue



Preparing venue for the training

TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

Table 1: List of Training Participants (contact details in Appendix 1)

Name	Agency
Ms Siutoni Tupou	Quarantine Officer, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Food and Fisheries (MAFFF)
Ms Seini Fotu	Conservation Officer, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MECC)
Ms Kelala Tonga	Ministry of Transport
Mr Siosiu Latu	Information and Communications, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
Mr Viliami Hakaumotu	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
Mr Ian Karika	Te Ipukarea Society, Cook Islands
Mr Haufi Filiar	Forestry Division, MAFFF
Mr Sione Malau	Fisheries Division, MAFFF
Mr Daisuke Yumiyama	Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) volunteer (attended 11, 12 June)

Note: The list of participants that attended the training was different to those nominated to attend prior to the 11th June (see Attendance, on Page 13).

RESOURCES

A full set of high quality resources, as detailed within the PII facilitator guide, was taken to Nuku'alofa, which included:

- 7 laminated posters
- 19 items of stationery / equipment (pens, pencils, etc.)
- Items including 3 laptop computers and 5 USB flash drives
- 12 sets of guideline documents

COURSE TIMETABLE

Timetable: Monday 11 June – Friday 15 June 2012

Day 1
Getting underway
Setting the scene
Principles
Overview of process
What is in the Resource Kit
Overview of the Resource Kit
Introduction to process stages
Review of projects
The training example
Wrap up and social gathering

Day 2
Day 2 setup
Stage 1 - Project Selection
Stage 2 - Feasibility Study
Introduction to Stage 3 - Project Design
Wrap up

Day 3
Day 3 setup
Feasibility Study Site Visit (includes lunch and morning tea in the field)
Stage 3 – Project Design
Wrap up

Day 4
Day 4 setup
Stage 4 – Operational planning
Stage 5 – Implementation
Wrap up

Day 5
Day 5 setup
Stage 5 – Implementation
Stage 6 – Sustaining the project
Recap PII Project Process
Next steps for your project
Wrap up of course

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND BLESSING

Facilitator, Dave Wallace, introduced himself. Ms Mafileo Masi, the Senior Environment Officer, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MECC), welcomed the participants and training team and opened the course on behalf of Mr 'Asipeli Palaki, CEO, MECC. Dr Viliami Kami, Head of Quarantine and Quality Management Division, MAFFF, blessed the training course. Our gratitude is extended to both Ms Masi and Dr Kami.

Each of the participants and training team members introduced themselves, describing their work role and their expectations of the course. Ian Karika from the Cook Islands was the only participant to be actively working on an island eradication project. Other attendees had recently been delegated responsibility for conservation projects, as the GEF-PAS (Global Environment Facility Pacific Alliance for Sustainability) programme comes into implementation in the Kingdom of Tonga and others had responsibility for differing aspects of biosecurity, including biological control; fruit-fly management; marine biosecurity and ballast water management.

CONTENT FOR THE TRAINING COURSE

Training for the course *How to eradicate rodents and cats on islands* is underpinned by the proficient use of the PII Resource Kit. The kit, available on-line, is down-loaded onto participant's laptops. The group then works methodically through components of the kit until familiarity and proficiency is achieved. Progress is monitored through a series of check exercises throughout the course.

Course content includes Resource Kit principles, project process overview, stakeholder engagement, biosecurity, monitoring and evaluation, the six project process stages, templates, guidelines and suggested sources of further information. Participants can also access examples of reports and plans.

The training is interactive between the facilitator, Subject Matter Experts and participants, with regular use of video clips, posters and photos of tools such as bait stations, tracking tunnels and suitable animal traps as well as the exercises.





SME Souad Boudjelas guiding the participants



SME Derek Brown guiding the participants

FEASIBILITY STUDY SITE VISIT

The location for the feasibility study site visit was Manima Island, 1.6 km north of Nuku'alofa harbour. The site visit allowed participants to work through components of the feasibility study at a typical location where they could work through the process of assessing the feasibility of eradicating rats from the island. Participants could decide relevant technical information and consider environmental and logistical issues as well as identify areas where further investigation and information would be required.

The island proved to be a close to ideal location for the training: it contained a good mix of coastal vegetation and exotic plants; evidence of the presence of rodents; suitable topography, size and location when considering appropriate rodent control techniques and other matters.

Note: The site visit is normally held on the afternoon of the third day, however, due to an inclement weather forecast, it was decided to bring the visit forward to the morning.



Manima Island; looking southeast from the northwestern end of the island

Participants and SME, Derek Brown, discussing rodent eradication methodology on Manima Island



A coconut with evidence of rat foraging found near the coconut palms



Discussion

TIMETABLE:

- The training start time was delayed for one hour on the first morning due to a devotion service at the venue. This had a small roll-over effect on the day's itinerary in that there was minimal time for training exercises, progress checks and videos of successful projects, etc.
- The feasibility study site visit was originally scheduled to occur on the afternoon of the third day (Wednesday). While it was a very sound decision to reschedule the field trip to the Wednesday morning, due to inclement weather, the team was tired after a salt-laden boat trip and walk around the island. It was difficult to maintain full attention to the afternoon classroom training sessions after an active morning field trip.
- The training team discussed the possibility of running future training courses from mid-week to the following mid-week timeframe and at a venue away from the participant's normal place of work and/or residence. Being away from work and home routines enables participants to concentrate on the training with less potential for interruption or distraction, e.g. domestic duties or work tasks. It would also allow the participants and training team to have additional time for discussion and networking outside of the formal training. The Feasibility Study site visit trip could be scheduled for the Saturday morning. Saturday afternoon and Sunday could be allocated "free-time" and allow the training team and participants time to refresh before completing the remainder of the course.
- The last day's training could be extended beyond the 1:00 pm finish, to allow more time for discussions and exercises.
- The scheduled training modules proceeded well with excellent timekeeping from Dave Wallace. However, some participants continued to take mobile phone calls or were occasionally called away from the training which interrupted proceedings.

COURSE CONTENT:

- PII needs to consider whether to include *control* as well as *eradication* methodology in the Resource Kit.
- Relevant 2 to 3 minute long DVD videos of rodent or cat eradication and monitoring methodology would be helpful to participants and assist in providing variation in subject matter.
- Participants were asked to prepare information prior to the training, specifically a project that they were working on (or planning for the future) to use as examples in teaching the process for planning and implementing invasive species management projects, however, only one participant was working on a project. Participants will be asked to provide "made-up", possible projects, if this situation re-occurs in future training courses.

FEASIBILITY STUDY SITE VISIT:

- A mainland back-up location is essential to allow for inclement weather conditions on the day. It was fortunate that the feasibility study field trip component, in this instance, could be completed before the weather deteriorated.
- A vessel capable of ferrying everybody in one trip would have been more suitable.
- The maritime weather checks proved accurate and useful.

ATTENDANCE:

- 7 of the 12 initial participants nominated to join the training did not attend. Three other participants attended in place of some of those that did not attend. This was unsettling for the trainers.

- Mobile phone use and participants being called away from the training led to disruption.

TRAINING EVALUATION

The seven participants present on the last day completed evaluation forms. One participant present on previous days did not attend the last day.

Questions and response scores from participants

At the conclusion of the training, participants were requested to provide written feedback to enable improvements for future courses. Most questions asked for a response indicating: 0 = not at all; progressing to 5 = well.

Average scores from the participants for the different elements of the training session were:

Feedback on the training outcomes:

1. Know the principles that underpin the Resource Kit: **4.3**
2. Know the PII process for an eradication project: **4.2**
3. Know the reasons and value for each stage and step in the process: **4.0**
4. Use the Resource Kit to locate information and resources: **4.5**
5. Know where you can access further learning resources and support: **4.3**
6. Have a plan of where to from here for your project: **4.3**

A typical comment from this section of the course was: *“very good and easy to use, especially the tools tab and templates”*

Feedback on the Resource Kit:

7. How useful will the Resource Kit be for you? **4.9**

Comments included: “easily understood”; “very good and easy to use”; “really useful for me as new to this area”.

Feedback on the training methods:

8. Overall, how effective were the methods of learning? (facilitated sessions, presentations with PowerPoint, SME support, practice exercises, progress checks, Feasibility Study Site Visit, ad breaks, use of Resource Kit and workbook): **4.9**

Overall opinion:

What was your overall opinion of the training course? **4.7**

Comments included: *“very useful training; our understanding enhanced through exercises and examples of case studies”*; *“would be good to have the notes two weeks before training start”*.

FOLLOW-UP NETWORKING AND ASSISTANCE FOR PARTICIPANTS

The trainers emphasised throughout the course that they are available for on-going mentoring and assistance with the Resource Kit or any other aspect of the training.

Peer review and critiquing of future eradication projects is also offered on an on-going basis.

All participants indicated during the training that they were likely to follow-up on this offer.

Conclusion

The *How to eradicate rodents and cats from islands* training, held in Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga, 11-15 June was completed successfully with a high overall evaluation rate from participants. The venue was not ideal but adequate. Although there was only one eradication project planned or currently underway by participants, comments suggested that the training had greatly assisted them in ensuring successful projects in future. The training also greatly assisted participants and PII to establish a network for on-going mentoring and support.

APPENDIX 1

List of participants: How to eradicate rodents and cats on islands: Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga, 11-15 June 2012.

Name	Organisation	Phone	Skype	Email
Siutoni Tupou	Quarantine Officer, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Food and Fisheries	7755021, 24257 (Wharf), 35301 (Airport)	uoputinouis	fruitfly@kalianet.to, siutonit@gmail.com
Seini Fotu	Conservation Officer, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change	7759912 (mob), 25050 (work)	talaa	sfotu09@gmail.com
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Ian Karika	Te Ipukarea Society, Cook Islands	(682)55499		birds@cookislands.co.ck
Daisuke Yumiyama	Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)			
Souad Boudjelas	PII	#64(9)9236805	souadb15	s.boudjelas@auckland.ac.nz
John Mather	PII	#64(9)9231868	john.mather58	j.mather@auckland.ac.nz
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Dave Wallace	Stella Associates			dave@StellaAssociates.co.nz