GUIDELINES ON

FEASIBILITY STUDY

PURPOSE

- These Guidelines are to be used by Project Managers conducting rodent and cat eradication projects based on the PII Resource Kit for Rodent and Cat Eradication.
- The Guidelines provide help and advice on undertaking a Feasibility Study.

1. THE FEASIBILITY CRITERIA

- To be successful an eradication project must fulfil 7 criteria:

Criteria	Explanation
Technically feasible	Can the technique(s) be used at the project site to remove all individuals of the target populations? Technique(s) must: i) Reach every individual target animal (i.e. no survivors) ii) Kill or remove the target species faster than their ability to breed even if their breeding rate increases to a maximum for the species. Any logistical challenges due to location, terrain or vegetation must be solvable. If there are multiple target species these conditions must be met for all species.
Sustainable	Can you prevent re-invasion? Once the eradication operation has removed the population of target species, it must be possible to ensure that a breeding population does not re-establish itself and no new invasive species invade the island.
Socially acceptable	Does the project have full support from the community and island users? Community support is vital if the project is to succeed.
Politically & Legally acceptable	Will you be able to secure all required permits and consents?

	Any eradication technique needs to be acceptable under the laws of the country. Certain toxins and baits have not yet been approved for use in some countries. Sometimes getting these approvals and law changes can become part of the eradication project.
Environmentally acceptable	Can you ensure a manageable impact to the environment? Undertaking eradication projects can impact the wider environment at the project site. For example, the effect of bait on non-target species. Unfortunately, sometimes non-target species may be killed by bait. While this is not ideal if the deaths are only for a short period and do not significantly impact or threaten the non-target species then you may conclude that the short term impact is a price worth paying to deliver the long term benefits of the eradication. These impacts must be outweighed by the benefits of successful eradication
Capacity	Can you find and acquire all the required skilled people, resources and equipment? Eradication projects are long, time-consuming projects requiring a mix of specialized skills. The implementing agency needs to have sufficient skilled people and equipment or source them from external organizations and contractors or upskill existing people. The materials and equipment required to undertake the work must be obtainable and legal to use within the country involved.
Affordability	Can you demonstrate to funders that the benefits of the project outweigh the costs? Eradication projects need adequate finances available to cover all aspects of the project. You cannot “buy” half an eradication – these are called failures – successful eradication projects only come in whole fully funded units. Doing it “on the cheap” is false economy because it leads to a high risk of failure.

- The technically feasible and sustainable criteria must always be achievable if the island is to remain invasive-free.
- A final decision on the feasibility of the project is based on 3 questions:

    1) Can it be done?

        An assessment of the 7 feasibility criteria.

    2) What will it take?

An assessment of the issues that have been raised in the Feasibility Study and how they will be resolved.

3) Does the benefit outweigh the cost?

Considering all aspects of costs and benefits (e.g. environmental, financial, social), does the benefit of the project justify the costs?

2. WHAT WILL IT TAKE

- As you assess the 7 feasibility criteria you will identify issues that while not making the project unfeasible will need to be addressed before the eradication operation. For example, given the different terrain of the project site it may not be clear to the feasibility team the density of bait to apply. As part of the Operational Planning, trials or further research will need to be undertaken to decide an acceptable application rate.
- It is important that these issues are cleared identified in the Feasibility Study Report as issues and that further work will be required to solve the problem. Failure to clearly record the issues can lead to them getting lost, not being resolved early enough and endangering the success of the eradication operation.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS AND RISKS TO NON-TARGET SPECIES

- The focus for managing risks to non-target species is on safeguarding the population rather than individual animals. Unfortunately, a population may suffer a small amount of short term loss during the project, but the project needs to be able to protect the long term viability of a non-target species.
- Emphasis is on managing the risk to endemic species and threatened/vulnerable species.
- Risks to the environment or to non-target species that are identified in the Feasibility Study may be best managed by incorporating them into the project objectives and outcomes. For example, the Feasibility Study identifies that a native crab is at risk from the proposed toxin to be used. A significant decrease in the crab population would not be acceptable. For the project team to manage this risk a further objective: 'The long term viability of the native crab population will be safeguarded' can be added to the project objectives. An associated outcome, for example, 'The post-eradication native crab population is no less than 90% of the pre-eradication population' would also be required.

4. THE SITE VISIT

- All visits to the island should undertake the required biosecurity actions to ensure no invasive species are taken to or from the island – See Guidelines on Biosecurity for further information.
- All visits to the island need to be respectful of the local community and land owners – See Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement for further information.
- Plan the visit well. Understand what you need to do during the visit and how the information gathered will be recorded.
- Keep a diary of what you did during the site visit. In the diary record when, where and what you did to remind yourself later of what happened.
- Ensure you have people sufficiently experienced in each of the 7 feasibility criteria to gather the required information and make an assessment of each criteria.
- But keep the site visit team as small as possible (the more people the harder the organization and cost).

5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- The site visit needs to be planned in close consultation with the relevant stakeholders, e.g. local community, island landowners – See Site Visit Section.
- Consider whether it would be useful to provide some stakeholders the opportunity to read and comment on draft versions of the Feasibility Study before it is completed. This may help provide further information for the team and ensure the stakeholders are not surprised by the final version of the report. It also allows the project team to start discussions on any contentious issues with relevant stakeholders.