



PARTNERSHIPS AGAINST ALIEN INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive alien species are a major global problem for conservation. Planning the activities for a partnership initiative that links the Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) of the IUCN's Species Survival Commission (SSC) with NZAID (New Zealand Agency for International Development) was the focus of a workshop held in Auckland, New Zealand during 2 – 4 April.

In 2002, the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity endorsed the “Cooperative Initiative on Invasive Alien Species on Islands.” The initiative was developed by New Zealand, ISSG and the Global Invasive Species Programme. Islands are a particular focus because of their high numbers of unique species, many of which are vulnerable to, and threatened with, extinction by invasive alien species. The sustainable livelihoods of island people often rely on native species for economic and cultural purposes.

This “Islands Initiative” has the goal of conserving island biodiversity by building capacity to manage invasive alien species on islands. With funding from NZAID, the first phase of this ambitious 5-year programme will concentrate on activities in Pacific Island countries. These activities include developing and applying better techniques for management that can then be adapted and used in other regions. It will also be building capacity for countries to manage invasive species and sharing knowledge, skills and techniques internationally. The emphasis is very much on ‘learning by doing’.

The workshop participants came from several Pacific Island countries and regional organisations, including the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).