

Background

The Pacific island states are known to have high levels of endemic biodiversity. Much of this is owned by local communities who are heavily reliant on these natural resources for their survival.



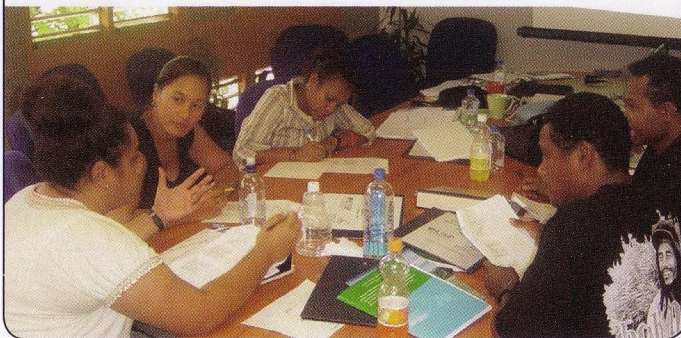
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However, global and local changes especially land degradation, coastal ecosystem stress, climate change and market liberalisation are having adverse impacts on these natural resources and habitats.



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It is against this background that the UK-based International Center for Protected Landscapes (ICPL), the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the Secretariat for the Regional Environment Program (SPREP), set up a partnership to support both the people and the biodiversity of the region by providing training for conservation professionals in the latest approaches to community-based conservation and sustainable development.



Pacific Islands Nature Conservation Training Program

1. THE PACIFIC ISLANDS COMMUNITY CONSERVATION COURSE (PICCC)

The course which runs every alternative year is now well established and has attracted participants from island states across the South Pacific. At the same time it has received acclaim from Governments, NGOs and sponsors alike.

The aim of the course is to build and improve the capacity of conservation practitioners; community representatives; government and NGO technical officers; training personnel in the management of community-based conservation projects.

This is a year-long course organised in a manner that sees the candidates encounter four weeks of intensive face-to-face learning sandwiched around a six-month work attachment at home and a final 3 weeks face-face course on campus that will involve coverage of additional learning modules, a review of phase-1 modules and discussions on in-country projects that will enable participants to share their experiences.

New Initiatives

2. POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN PROTECTED AREAS (2 Courses)

The PICCC course material has also been developed for study in-country by the flexible learning mode under a new Darwin Initiative. Units include:

- Communication skills
- Awareness raising
- Partnerships and participatory techniques
- Role of policy and governance
- Conflict resolution and consensus building
- Leadership in protected area management
- Marine managed areas
- Island conservation
- Protected areas in the 21st Century

A second flexible learning course has been developed which will deal more with the foundations of protected area management. This will be offered in Semester 1, 2008 and will likely also be offered on campus in Fiji to help evaluate the course.

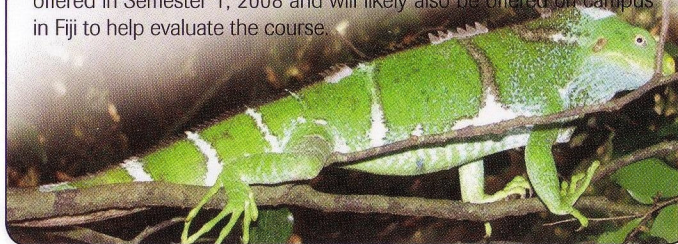


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Program Summary

Units include:

- Concepts and definitions of conservation and sustainable development
- Historical perspective of protected areas
- Integrated conservation and development
- Marine managed areas
- Island conservation
- Protected areas in the 21st Century

3. POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT (4 Courses)

The Darwin Initiative also anticipates the development of two additional courses which, added to the previous two, would make up a 4-course Diploma. The exact coverage of these courses is still under discussion and advice will be sought regionally to determine the most useful topics.

4. POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN BIODIVERSITY & CONSERVATION

The University of the South Pacific recently developed a specific diploma in the academic aspects of conservation consisting of four existing courses, all of which are only offered at the Suva Campus. The courses are:

- Research Methods
- Biodiversity and Conservation
- Animal Behaviour
- Molecular Systematic
- Applied Statistics
- Island Biogeography
- Courses from Darwin Project may be considered

5. SCIENCE OF MARINE MANAGED AREAS

USP staff have developed a 6-week intensive course in the science of marine managed areas which they anticipate to offer in 2008. Coverage would include:

- Applications of MMAs
- Enforcement and compliance
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Community approaches and adaptive management
- Project design and statistical analysis
- Decision support tools
- Scaling up MMAs.