



# Virtual Event Concept Note

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## 1. Virtual Event Goals & Objectives

### What is the purpose?

We organize the event because, as a region, we want to:

- Influence the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework
- Guide and innovate conservation action at a national and regional level in Oceania
- Secure sustainable funding for Nature Conservation in Oceania

### What are our objectives?

- Review the State of Conservation in Oceania and define Oceania's progress towards the achievement of regional and global conservation priorities.
- Define a Pacific based and initiated agenda and priorities for conservation beyond 2020 (new Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas)
- Build Pacific nature conservation capacity and stimulate learning related to biodiversity conservation
- Endorse the framework at a regional level through a High-level Conference Declaration with regional priorities for Nature Conservation

### Target Audience

We want 500 to 800 attendees from a very wide range of stakeholder groups including **Pacific island governments, intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, donors, development partners, community groups, youth groups and interested individuals.**

## 2. Date and duration

The conference has a total **duration of 4 days, with the main Conference** program held over 3 days from **Tuesday, November 24, 2020 up to Thursday, November 26**, and the 4<sup>th</sup> day, Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November allocated to side events.

The virtual conference will be hosted online over three days, 24-26 November 2020 between 10.00-16.00 daily (in a time zone that suits best Pacific Island participation), with side-events on 27 November between 8:30-17:30 (same time zone). Side-events are offered as programmatic space for sponsors.

Actual promotion starts at least 2 months before the conference. Preconference workshops also take place in that period. Archives and recorded sessions remain available after the virtual event ends. A post event strategy is rolled out.



### 3. Virtual Event Concept

#### Conference title

##### **Nature Conservation Action for a Resilient Pacific**

(Our aim is to drive action and transformative, high-impact and scalable initiatives for specific challenges relating to nature conservation in the Pacific Islands. These actions should enhance the capability of Pacific Countries and Territories to cope with the challenges they face)

#### Virtual event themes

Content is split across **3 key themes** that allow attendees to explore the diverse topics addressed during the event. The key themes are:

- **our ocean**
- **our island**
- **our connection with nature**

To connect themes with the conference title (see above) **in each theme a maximum of 6 action tracks** will be selected by the conference organizers. An action track refers to a path towards the objectives of the Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas and responds to a challenge or challenges that are identified in the review of the State of Conservation in Oceania (SOCO).

**Action tracks are selected by the conference organisers based on regional priority and relevance (link with SOCO/framework) and submitted inputs (speakers/Sessions) from the original conference.**

An example for an action track in the theme ‘our ocean’ can be ‘plastic pollution’ or ‘Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)’; for islands an example can be ‘Terrestrial protected areas’ or ‘management and eradication of invasive species’, for ‘our connection with nature’ an example can be ‘lifelong learning about nature’ or sustainable production’ or ‘nature based sustainable tourism’.

**Three action tracks are not linked to 1 of the themes but are relevant for all the themes.** These are: ‘**financing** nature conservation’, ‘**data** for more informed decision-making’ and ‘**governance** that works for nature conservation’.

#### Virtual event sessions.

At the virtual event, all sessions have a maximum duration of 1 hour. And every session has one host.



There are 4 timeslots per day: 10am-11am, 11:30am-12:30am, 1:30pm-2:30pm and 3pm-4pm. This allows members of the audience to attend 4 sessions (6 for the side-event day that has a longer duration and more timeslots.).

There are plenary sessions and parallel sessions.

### ***Virtual parallel sessions***

At the virtual event, sessions on action tracks (max 6 per theme) are programmed in a parallel way, as such allowing attendees to choose between the 3 themes. There will be only **1 session per action track, happening at any one time.**

This approach enables: (1) to recover a minimal set of relevant content from the wide diversity of content that was going to be available at the original conference, (2) to reconnect sessions with the core objectives (SOCO/framework), (3) still to provide some content choice for attendees (parallel sessions to choose from).

These ‘action track sessions’ organised as parallel sessions will be a mix between traditional panel discussions and dialogues. Each session has a moderator and 3-4 speakers/panellists. We aim to have the following **mix of expertise in every session: ‘Pacific expertise’, ‘thematic leadership’, ‘action experience’, ‘scientific /M&E knowledge’**. If certain speakers combine all this expertise dimensions, the format might change to an interview/TED talk.

For moderators we seek to re-engage the conveners of the original conference or suggested moderators from earlier submitted session proposals. Speakers/panellists will be selected by the conference organizers. The focus shifts to having passionate speakers as this element is even more important in a virtual setting to attract and retain attendees.

Other approaches/formats to enhance levels of interactivity and participants’ engagement in these sessions can be considered as long as the main content of the session remains focused on exploring the path towards Framework objectives and responding to a challenge that is identified based on the State of Conservation in Oceania.

### ***Virtual plenary sessions***

Next to these parallel sessions, the virtual event has 3 plenary sessions (for the entire audience):

- 24 November 2020 (10am-11am): opening and setting the stage session (content: conference title and state of conservation)
- 26 November 2020 (1:30pm-2:30pm): presentation of the new Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas
- 26 November 2020 (3pm-4pm): Presentation of the High-Level Declaration and closing.



Approaches/formats to bring in some interactivity and participants' engagement can be considered as long as the main content of the session remains focused on the content of the session.

### **Virtual High-Level Segment sessions**

At the virtual event, a High-Level segment is organized on 26 November 2020 from 10am-2:30pm.

The segment is open only for Heads of Government and Heads of Organisations (of PIRT).

The Segment has an introduction, a roundtable around the conference themes (eventually with parallel sessions), and conclusions.

This Declaration, as well as the Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas is currently being developed by a consultant and pre-conference participation of PIRT and PICTs is ensured through consultations (via surveys and virtual workshops).

### **A virtual exhibition and virtual side-events for sponsors**

Sponsors still want to promote the inspiring work they have been doing in meaningful nature conservation action in the Pacific islands. Through a virtual exhibition they can still have the benefits and opportunities to establish or expand their brand value and visibility in Pacific nature conservation networks, introduce new projects, services and products to hundreds of the region's main players and most influential stakeholders and find new clients and develop partnerships.

Benefits will be expressed in levels of marketing, branding value and visibility. A variety of options will be offered between standard and high-level sponsors.

### **A virtual Networking Lounge**

People generally attend events for three reasons: 1) gather information/gain knowledge; 2) network with others; and 3) for the location. A virtual event can deliver on these first two objectives as well as or better than physical events, but it needs to be organised. A virtual space to pair the attendees in groups and promote networking is to be provided.

The data and story galleries (see below, 'data and story gallery' under Technology) can be an intermediate to connect people and to connect people to information.

### **A Digital Event Bag**

A digital event bag contains a mix of product samples (eg. books), vouchers, promotional gifts, general information regarding the event, flyers, brochures, or other advertising material that



the organizer makes available to the visitor. Besides the organizer, participating sponsors and brands can place their content in this bag.

Sponsors are embracing the opportunity to provide event attendees with digital goodies. These giveaways deliver an advantage that water bottles and portable mugs or branded pens do not: reporting capabilities. The digital bag also has the potential to generate additional sponsorship revenue for the event organizers.

### **A New Caledonian look and vibe**

Although not anymore physically hosted in New Caledonia, the look and vibe of the conference still should breath New Caledonia. This can be done in using names for virtual rooms, use of New Caledonian video and audio, use of New Caledonian artists for the entertainment etc.

In the 2 months before the conference a day is organised in New Caledonia where New Caledonian nature conservation actions are showcased. The main target audience for this specific live-event is the New-Caledonian population. This event is organised by New Caledonia and recovers the energy and work that was generated under the original conference. In the framework of this day, communication inputs are harvested to feed the pre-conference communication and the website content (see below, 'data and story gallery' under Technology).

### **Participants' engagement**

#### ***Before the event***

In the last 2 months before the conference **at least 2 virtual consultation workshops are organised around the Framework** for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas. This Framework is already being developed by a consultant and participation of PIRT and PICTs is ensured through consultations (via surveys). Approaches/formats to enhance levels of interactivity and participants' engagement during these workshops should be considered.

Secondly, **social media and the event website are used to promote the conference and prepare the audience** for the virtual conference (main messages are around the value the event will bring them and the logistics). An additional feature might be to create an online forum to update the audience and find out their expectations or very short video "teasers" of talks to help attendees choose which virtual sessions to attend.

#### ***At the conference:***

Next to the virtual Networking Lounge, the following features are minimal requirements:

- Speaker content needs to be exciting (turn PowerPoint presentation into infographics and incorporate audio or video)



- For Virtual parallel sessions and Virtual Preconference workshops interactivity chatbots, polls, Q&A sessions are planned for. A specific volunteer can manage the conversations with attendees while the speaker is making a presentation, or the panellists are debating.
- Virtual plenary and parallel sessions are to be recorded and turned into content available for up to 1 year after the conference.
- Attendees need to be able to go from a virtual parallel session to another.
- Widgets for surveys or polling, asking compelling questions to spark a response (including tabulating the outcomes on the screen during livestream or on website).

Additional features might be:

- Use video teasers to introduce the session and set the stage for the topic of the session.
- Integrate gamification (borrowing fun elements found in games and incorporating them into a non-gaming perspective) with trivia, quizzes, and puzzles.
- Use drawing of the conversations/webinars (visual note taking)
- Use collaborative whiteboards for virtual open space (around a focusing statement or question) or for a virtual hackathon (to find new ideas around a certain theme).
- Use breaks as 'interview booths' for interviewing a speaker or panellist with fun questions.
- Virtual expositions (eg. history and outcomes of the previous conferences)
- Entertainment (music, video, ...)

### **Post-event**

Engagement is encouraged to get **feedback** on the achievements of the conference.

Secondly the engagement is further organised around a **Post event engagement strategy**. A post engagement strategy is focusing on what the conference wants to influence (see purpose at the start of this note). The outcomes PIRT would expect, like and love to see after the conference and related communication activities are concretised through a virtual workshop held before the conference. And during 1 year after the conference participants are kept up to date about the communication activities that were undertaken by PIRT members to achieve the influencing objectives. The conference board agreed already on 1 activity for this strategy namely to make the High-level Conference Declaration with regional priorities for Nature Conservation known through a publication in a world's leading journal as well as through press releases.

Thirdly a light version of the website remains available and all recorded virtual plenary and parallel **sessions as well as all other relevant content remains available** on the website for up to 1 year after the conference. An additional feature might be to keep the hype alive by rebroadcasting the conference or highlighting essential sessions.





## 4. Format of the Virtual Event

### Technology

The core components are

- **Webinar and/or Webcasts tools** to deliver audio and video content presented by moderators, speakers, panellists, facilitators, sponsors, and exhibitors. All sessions are organised as webinars with moderators, speakers and attendees tuning in. These webinars are livestreamed with people joining in from their home location. Conference branding needs to be present (for example by using conference backdrops or alternatives). Pre-recorded speeches or video messages can be integrated. Webinars are recorded and remain available on the website.
- **Communication tools** to allow for interaction with and among attendees, subject matter experts, and exhibitors (these tools range from the text chat features included in most Webinar platforms to integrated discussion board capabilities in virtual event platforms to social media tools such as Twitter or event Apps. Use of social media tools has the benefit to allow for the free flow of communication among online participants).
- **Document- and resource-sharing tools** to provide attendees with information that complements and supports presentations from subject matter experts. These documents and resources may include articles, case studies, checklists, and copies of presenters' slides—in short, the same types of materials an attendee at a place-based event would typically receive. For sponsors and exhibitors, the materials may also include whitepapers, brochures, and other marketing materials. The current thinking is to use a website for this purpose.

#### Minimum pages required for the website are:

- Home
- About (conference title and PIRT)
- Themes (with subpages per theme and action tracks)
- Programme (with clicks to themes and speakers)
- Action tracks
- Virtual Exhibition space
- Networking Lounge
- Registration
- Participation
- Subscribe to updates
- Action track pages: in each action track there is the following content:
  - Main challenge (source of content is SOCO)
  - Action track (source is Framework)





- Data gallery (Attendees can submit a striking finding regarding the action track by sending a map, chart, picture, pictogram, quote that illustrates the challenge)
- Story gallery (Attendees can submit a lightning story per action track by recording a presentation of up to five minutes)

### Notes:

- All proposed technology needs to be **user-friendly** and consider likely internet bandwidth issues in the region.
- Streaming for groups can be organised in hubs per country (as solution for limited bandwidth within certain countries).
- A visual identity and brand are streamlined.
- Space to host, store and share documents and resources (audio/video) is to be sufficient.
- The data and story galleries are set up to integrate the many more experiences that were submitted in the call for speakers and sessions for the original conference.

### Visual identity and branding

The original branding (beetle) is kept (as it is work of a New Caledonian artist, Nicolas Mole and as such supports the concept of keeping a New Caledonian look and feel).

Other original conference branding elements (colours and letter types) can be reconsidered.

### Language

The conference remains **bilingual (English and French)**.

- All content on website and communication tools is to be available in English and French.
- All sessions need to have Remote Simultaneous Interpretation. The actual provision of translators does not need to be part of the technology contract, but the technology contractor needs to ensure that attendees have access to live translation.

### Security and Privacy Protocols

Any virtual platform that enjoys substantial usage can become a target for attack, trolling, disruption, and surveillance. The security protocols of the companies that are behind the tools and technology we use need to be up to date.

### Property rights and protocols

The property rights and protocols of the people and organisations providing content need to be respected.



## Training

As the virtual setting is quite different from the one, we are used to in physical conferences training is likely needed for: **attendees, speakers, session hosts, exhibitors and volunteers.** Volunteers are persons that are present in each virtual meeting space, monitor the chat channels, greet participants, reception areas, help users test their audio, help train session chairs and speakers, help session chairs gather questions, and interface with the rest of the organizing team when problems arise.

## Evaluation and feedback

We want to analyse the event and obtain feedback. Therefore:

- participants will be invited to quickly express satisfaction level per session.
- participants will be invited to take a survey at the end of the event. The link can be provided directly after the event (through the app) or later by email. Some sort of incentive to fill the survey generally boosts participation levels.
- Collect data from the technology platforms and mine the available data (registration and attendance per sessions, time in sessions, show up rate (for sessions and exhibitor booths), leads generated per sponsor, average attendee time at event, average amount of sessions visited, average attendee interactions, average downloads per attendee, total amount of attendees, amount of Pacific Island Countries and Territories attendees, etc.).

Learnings are to be used by the conference organizers to follow up with attendees and sponsors and to debrief with staff and speakers.