

## **Pacific Invasives Learning Network Guide for planning meetings**

This guide is based on a 5-day meeting for a group of around 40 people. Taylor it to fit other periods or numbers.

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### **General points**

In advance:

- Good preparation and planning are essential for an effective meeting. This includes preparing the participants so that their expectations are realistic and they can engage fully.
- Involve the participants in the planning process, make sure they know what to expect at the meeting and are clear what they will get from it.
  - Define the objectives of the meeting together with the participants: What is its purpose? Don't have a meeting if the purpose is not clear.
  - Define the outputs of the meeting together with the participants: What do you want to get out of it? What do they want to get out of it?
- A group of 3 facilitators works well for a meeting with 40 participants. Make sure you know your facilitators and their individual strengths. Meet with them beforehand and ensure that they are familiar with the agenda and understand their role in each session. If necessary, provide them with guides for their sessions and / or coach them in their roles.
- It is essential to visit the venue (and field trip site if applicable) in advance to check out the facilities and plan activities. If possible do this with the facilitation team. A good venue has:
  - A room large enough to comfortably seat the entire group, with adequate setup (screen and blackout) for powerpoint presentations
  - Adequate spaces for the required number of break-out groups
  - Spaces for serving coffee, tea breaks, and lunch, without disrupting the sessions
  - An outdoor area for fresh air (and smokers and betel nut chewers)

- Make sure that the laptop to be used for presentations has the most up-to-date versions of the software.
- Delegate responsibility for the different activities among the facilitation team / PILN team etc.
- It is PILN policy (established from the precedent set by the Palau meeting) to source as much of the materials locally as possible. It is also strongly recommended that the economic benefits from the meeting be spread as widely as possible – avoid buying all your stuff from one source.

#### Agenda design:

- Keep formal presentations to a minimum.
- Aim for a balance of 2:1 in the time allocated for discussions : presentations – remember, “less is more”
- Use the mornings when people are freshest to develop key issues.
- Use the afternoons to consolidate issues and cover more routine points.
- The session after lunch is known as the “graveyard slot” as everyone tends to be sleepy. Schedule something fun and active for this slot.
- Make a break in the middle of the week – for a field trip and free time. People will get more from a meeting if they have some time out for reflection in the middle.
- Allow time for informal networking, this is an activity in itself not wasted time.

#### During the meeting:

- Establish the ground rules for acceptable behaviour early on and keep to them.
- The facilitation team should meet every evening to review the day’s events and prepare for the following day.
- Be prepared to be flexible.
- Make sure everybody is comfortable – they can’t focus on the meeting issues if they are unhappy with their room or the food, etc.
- Check unacceptable behaviour early.

## Equipment and materials guide for meetings

This list assumes a meeting attendance of 40 people.

Item	Number	Notes
Laptop computers	3 minimum	1. Presentations 2. Writing up session reports 3. To collect meeting documents and photos At least one must be capable of burning CDs.
Infocus / datashow	2	1 for use and 1 for back-up and / or group work.
Microphone	If required	Venue specific
Photocopier	1	Access to one required.
Extension cables	2	At least.
Multi socket adapters	2	With surge protectors, to allow several things to be plugged in at a time.
International adapters	2	If applicable
White board	1 large	At least, more if possible
Flip chart paper	200 - 300 sheets	Depending on the agenda and assuming a lot of break-out groups
Flip chart stands	1 for each breakout group planned.	If boards are used instead of stands, clips or pins will be needed to fix the paper to them.
White board pens, 3 colours	5 sets	Black, blue and red
Marker pens, 3 colours	10 sets	Black, blue and red
Stapler and staples	2	
Paperclips	box	
Drawing pins	box	
Scissors	2	
Blank CDs	60	10 at the meeting for sharing documents and photos 50 after the meeting for the report and documents
Blank DVDs	20	After the meeting for meeting documents
Copy paper	3 reams	In-kind payment, or budget to pay for copying
Copier toner	1 cartridge	
Lined A4 paper, for notes	1 ream	
Notebooks	45	1 per participant plus extra
File covers and / or bags to hold meeting documents	45	1 per participant plus extra

<b>Item</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Pens	60	1 per participant plus extra. Blue or black.
Masking tape	3 rolls	
Name badges with pins / clips	60	Large size
Materials for specific exercises	As required	Example: string, sticky dots.
Promotional materials	As agreed	As agreed
Prizes and other incentives	A selection	One for each morning and afternoon of the event.
Chocolates and candies	A selection	For general incentives

### Meeting evaluation

The following form is a suggestion as a meeting evaluation form. Allow 15 minutes for completion at the end of the final day and ideally distribute it early to give participants time to reflect on their answers. Don't allow them to leave until they have returned it.

#### Meeting evaluation

Did anything exceed your expectations in the meeting? If the answer is yes, please tell us what.

What specific benefits, if any, did you get from the meeting?

Did anything fail to meet your expectations? If the answer is yes, please tell us what and why it failed.

What would you change to improve future meetings?

How satisfied do you feel about the meeting overall (circle the one which applies):

**very satisfied**      **satisfied**      **not very satisfied**      **dissatisfied**

Feel free to make any other comment here:

### Checklist of activities for planning meetings

These activities are listed in chronological order.

When	Activity	Check
Start at least 6 months before the meeting and have these activities completed by 3 months before the meeting.	Secure funding	
	Delegate tasks among the host team	
	Look for corporate sponsors locally	
	Define meeting objectives and outputs	
	Fix dates, avoiding clashes with other national / regional events as far as possible	
	Visit potential venues, select and book	
	Invite participants formally by letter, send out registration forms with a deadline for submission of 3 months before the meeting	
	Visit hotels, select and block book accommodation	
	Identify the facilitation team and meet with them	
	Draft the agenda and circulate for feedback	
	Assess the field trip options and visit sites. Select.	
	Design the promotional materials and identify sources	
	Draft the equipment list and identify sources	
	Identify the keynote speaker (if applicable)	
	Identify who will give the prayer (if applicable)	
Activities to be completed between 3 months and 1 month before the meeting	Notify participants of homework to be done before the meeting – presentations and handouts.	
	Confirm number and identity of the participants	
	Create an email distribution list for all participants	
	Source and book the lunches and snacks	
	Source and book the closing dinner (if applicable)	
	Notify the media (if applicable)	
	Finalise the agenda	
	Prepare your own presentations	
	Prepare background materials and distribute them to participants (eg. country information sheet)	
	Identify and contact all presenters or session organizer, ensure they understand the objectives of their sessions and that you have the same expectations	
	Book field trip transport	
	Confirm accommodation, pass names with arrival and departure times to the hotel(s)	
	Book and confirm flights (if applicable)	
	Book transport to and from the venue to hotels	
	Confirm venue and visit again with the facilitation team in the light of the finalized agenda	

When	Activity	Check
	Confirm the field trip venue and visit again with the facilitation team in the light of the finalized agenda	
	Source the equipment and materials needed, order anything not available locally.	
	Decide on promotional material and source it	
	Arrange leis (or equivalent, if applicable)	
	Identify administrative assistance (1 or 2 people) and ensure they understand their roles	
Activities for the week before the meeting.	Receive all meeting documents (handouts etc) from participants, presenters, etc.	
	Buy locally sourced equipment and materials	
	Copy handouts and other meeting documents	
	Prepare meeting folders ready to hand out	
	Test the laptop to be used for presentations with the infocus	
	Put all presentations onto the laptop to be used.	
	Final briefing with facilitation team	
	All materials and promotional material should be collected by now	
	Confirm lunches, snacks and transport	
	Confirm the event with the media (if applicable)	
The days immediately before the meeting	Greet international arrivals at the airport	
	Collect electronic copies of any last presentations	
	Pay allowances and incidental travel costs	
	Distribute meeting folders and promotional materials	
These activities to be completed within 1 week after the meeting	Analyse meeting evaluation and note lessons learned	
	Return all loaned equipment	
	Formally thank sponsors and supporters	
	Prepare a press release	
	Produce the meeting report and distribute to all participants	
	Follow-up activities as applicable	