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IAMSLIC Site Selection Committee

Dear Committee Members,

Subject: Proposal to hold the 2014 IAMSLIC conference in Noumea, New Caledonia

On behalf of the IAMSLIC members in the Pacific region I am pleased to propose that the 2014 IAMSLIC Annual Conference to be held in Noumea, capital of New Caledonia. New Caledonia is a French territory in the South Pacific. It is approximately 1,950 kilometers from Sydney, Australia and 17,000 kilometers from Paris, France. Noumea is on a large peninsula, blessed with many welcoming islands around its shores and is over 150 years old. It is the country's administrative, political and economic center and reflects a multicultural society. 2011 World Bank figures give a total population of 249,000 people. French is the official language of the country, however many people speak English too.

The island was settled by both Britain and France during the first half of the 19th century. In 1853 it was made a French possession and served as a penal colony for four decades after 1864.

In 1854 British navigator and trader James Paddon first discovered the site on which Noumea would later be built. In the same year French Naval officer Tardy de Montravel docked in the bay of Nou-Méa where he built a strong fort and later renamed the site from Port-de-France to Nouméa in order not to confuse it with Port-de-France in Martinique. Convict labor was used from 1864 to 1897 to build major infrastructure – roads, buildings and ports. Settlers and immigrants from other colonies settled in Nouméa. The nickel industry played a major role in the city's growth up to the Second World War.

In 1942 American troops arrived in New Caledonia and used it as one of their major air force bases for the war in the Pacific. Noumea developed rapidly during this time. The nickel boom from 1968 to 1976 again brought development to the city. Population steadily increased causing significant urbanization.¹

Agitation for independence during the 1980s and early 1990s ended in the 1998 Noumea Accord; over a period of 15 – 20 years an increasing amount of governing responsibility will be transferred from France to New Caledonia. The agreement also commits France to conduct a referendum between 2014 and 2018 to decide whether New Caledonia should assume full sovereignty and independence.ⁱⁱ

Today Noumea is a modern city mixed with the older and historical areas. The people are very welcoming and it is a safe country.

In July 2008, 15,000 of New Caledonia's 24,000 square kilometers of lagoon were added to the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage List. Six protected zones were established. The lagoon is protected by coral reefs 1600 km long. Its clear crystal waters and exceptional flora and fauna make it some of the most remarkable and beautiful diving and sailing sites in the world.

Noumea is also home to the headquarters of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) (<http://www.spc.int/en/about-spc.html>). SPC is an international organization with a membership of 22 Pacific Islands and four of the original founding countries. SPC serves these Island countries and territories by assisting them to achieve sustainable development. Grouped under 7 technical divisions SPC provides technical expertise and assistance in public health, geoscience, agriculture, forestry, water resources, disaster management, fisheries, education (community, TVET, quality and standards for all school levels), statistics, transport, energy, ICT, media, human rights, gender, youth and culture.

The Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) Division's <http://www.spc.int/fame/> services are high in demand within the region and are part of the core business of SPC. Its main work lies in providing SPC's member countries and territories with information they need to make informed decisions on the management and development of their aquatic resources, and help to provide the tools and strengthen the capacity needed to implement these decisions. It consists of two main programs: the [Oceanic Fisheries Programme](#) (OFP) and the [Coastal Fisheries Programme](#) (CFP) — and was host to the [Coral Reef Initiatives for the Pacific \(CRISP\)](#). These programs specifically deal with the sustainable management of oceanic fisheries and coastal and near-shore fisheries and aquaculture in the Pacific.

The Oceanic Fisheries Program is the Pacific Community's regional centre for tuna fisheries research, fishery monitoring, stock assessment and data management.

The Coastal Fisheries Program is made up of three sections; Aquaculture, Near-shore Fisheries Development and Coastal Fisheries Science and Management, assists Pacific Island Countries and Territories to sustainably manage their coastal fisheries, near-shore fisheries and aquaculture.

The division's digital library <http://www.spc.int/fame/en/fame-digital-library> comprises more than 7000 fisheries and aquaculture-related documents which include newsletters, meeting papers, technical reports, field reports, information bulletins, technical manuals and handbooks etc. These documents are available in digital format, are in French and English and produced by, for, or in collaboration with SPC.

Proposed Venue:

The preferred site for the annual conference in Noumea would be at the Secretariat of the Pacific Community headquarters.

SPC's main conference room has a seating capacity of 180, with full audio visual and PC projection facilities. A smaller conference room seats 20 people and the Archives meeting room can seat from 25 – 30 people. The main conference room also has capacity to record sessions (audio and video). SPC's interpretation and translation team are available to translate from English to French and vice versa. A deck across from the main conference room is used to host receptions, banquets, cocktails, tea breaks and lunches. The deck can take up to 80 people with the possibility of using the garden for more seats.

The foyer of the conference room has space for poster exhibitions and if required there is also space in the library, above the conference room that can be used to display posters. There is sufficient space in a room next to the conference room that can be used to store conference materials

Other venues are also available if required; hotels and the Tjibaou Cultural Center offer excellent facilities for conferences, banquets and receptions.

Internet Access:

A small room equipped with 3 computers provides internet access to allow for participants to check emails etc. The room also has a photocopier. The library has 2 computers and wifi for internet access, otherwise wifi is available in the main conference room.

Location:

SPC is conveniently located opposite the beautiful Bay of Anse Vata with a lovely stretch of beach, only 10 minutes from the Noumea city centre by car. Buses run every 20 - 30 minutes and stop very close to SPC's main entrance. Taxi services are also available.

Major groceries shops are within walking distance of the major hotels close to SPC. Buses also run past large grocery shops. Bank of Paris (BNP) has a branch within walking distance from the hotels and SPC and an ATM machine to change money. ATM machines are provided throughout New Caledonia and accept major credit cards.

Catering

SPC works with 3 local catering companies to provide meals, usually lunches and dinners. Tea breaks are catered for in-house. A kitchen adjoining the deck is used for this purpose. Other venues for meals are possible given the range of excellent restaurants and hotels in Noumea.

A large number of specialties from around the world are offered by restaurants; from cheap snack bars to 5 star hotels, there is a tremendous range of choices. In Noumea, they say you can eat in one different restaurant for a whole year! From a small snack to a big feast, the prices range from USD10.00 to USD60.00 and more for a gourmet meal.

Accommodation:

Noumea has a wide range of accommodation options ranging from luxury hotels and beach resorts to the youth hotels, motels, downtown hotels and guesthouses. Hotel chains include: Le Meridien, Ramada and La Promenade Group.

Costs for the bigger hotels vary between US99.00 and US199.00 per night including breakfast, while motels and guest houses offer a little less.

SPC however has special rates also applicable to conference attendees with four hotels that are within walking distance to SPC; Casa Del Sole, Pacific, Le Lagoon and Ramada. The special rates are between US75.00 and US100.00 dollars a night with breakfast.

Local Attractions:

Guided tours of Noumea are available in either air conditioned buses or little “open” motorized trains.

Within the city there are many local attractions unfortunately not all can be listed; some of the major ones include visits to:

- Noumea’s 3 museums – the Noumea Municipal, the Geological museum and the Maritime Museum. Of particular interest is the Maritime Museum which traces the rich history of New Caledonia in the Pacific from the times of the canoes through to modern times.
- Tjibaou Cultural Centre- the cultural centre sits in a magical setting at the edge of a lagoon and provides insight into the indigenous Kanak culture along with other Oceanic cultures. Concerts, shows and conferences are hosted year round at the centre.
- Aquarium des Lagoons – visit this to discover New Caledonia’s aquatic ecosystems; freshwater, mangrove, reef and deep sea.
- Ouen Toro – this hill gives a great vantage point of Noumea. Its criss crossed by walking tracks with dry forest with its unique protected ecosystem. The summit offers a magnificent panoramic look out point guarded by two old Australian canons and overlooks a popular paragliding spot.

For those who have time to kill before and after the conference and would like to venture further afield, Noumea offers some excellent choices to visit islands within islands, unfortunately not all can be mentioned here :

Close to Noumea:

L'île au Canards (Duck Island) and its underwater path. Takes 5 minutes to cross from Anse Vata beach by taxi boats and costs approximately USD13.00

L'ilot Maitre – with its vast marine reserves, luxury hotel with over water bungalows and water sports leisure centre.

L'île aux Goelands – with its fauna reserve.

The **Phare Amédée island** with its 56 meter tall light house is a sought after place to relax and is surrounded by marvelous sites for under water diving (<http://www.amedeeisland.com/>)

Further afield:

Isle de Pines – 20 minutes by air from Noumea or 2 hours and 15 minutes by catamaran, this island is a delight for visitors. The adventurous can attempt the climb to the summit of the island and explore magnificent caves and lookouts. For the sea lovers, slip on a mask and fins to explore the beautiful underwater world. For food lovers, you will not be disappointed with range of delicious sea food and take the opportunity to sample the traditional *bougna*, (a traditional meal made from vegetables with chicken or fish, wrapped in banana leaves and cooked in an earth oven) and for the not so adventurous, just enjoy basking in the sun on the islands beautiful beaches.

Several professional organizations and centres have guided snorkeling and diving trips close to Noumea and further afield.

The **Riviere Bleu Park** in Yate (approximately an hour's drive from Noumea) stretches over approximately 9000 hectares and is a worthwhile place to visit. Covering a large area of varied scenery, from the artificial lakes edge to the forests, many species of flora and fauna unique to New Caledonia can be found here.

New Caledonia offers good hiking areas for those interested in hiking. Sites are within Noumea or further South starting at Prony, an old mining village located on the southern tip of the mainland. The hikes can take anywhere between 3 hours to 5 hours to complete, though there are some shorter walks.

The district of **Bourail** (approximately 1 and a half hours drive from Noumea) is a camper's paradise. There is lots to do and visit in Bourail; some leisure activities include glass bottom boat trips, snorkeling, camping, mountain biking, visiting the museum and the shrimp farm.

Traveling to Noumea

All international flights arrive in Tontouta International Airport which is situated approximately 50kms north of Noumea. It takes approximately 50 minutes for the trip from the airport into town. Taxis and shuttles are available at the airport. Airport transfer costs are approximately USD30.00. SPC normally arranges for airport transfers at the same cost.

The approximate airfares from the following destinations to Noumea are:

- London/Paris – between USD2890 – USD3300.00
- Los Angeles – between USD1860 – USD2300.00
- Sydney/Brisbane – between USD930.00 – USD1250.00
- Africa – between USD3600.00 – USD4150.00

Local Support

This bid has the support of SPC's senior management. Support is also available from SPC's library and Fisheries Division, as well as from the Pacific Islands Marine Resources Information Systems (PIMRIS). Other institutions within New Caledonia and the region are likely to add their support if the proposal is accepted.

More Information on New Caledonia

The links below provide more information on New Caledonia including a link for hotels and accommodation throughout New Caledonia.

<http://en.visitnewcaledonia.com/>

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/new-caledonia>

http://www.tripadvisor.com/SmartDeals-g294129-New_Caledonia-Hotel-Deals.html

ⁱ Jean-Jacques Buchox. (2011). *Globe-Trotter New Caledonia English edition no. 1*. Noumea, New Caledonia: Editions Allure.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/nc.html>