

ACTION PLAN 2021-2023 of the INTERREG Europe Project INVALIDIS:

Protecting European Biodiversity from Invasive Alien Species





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Part I – General information

Project:	INVALIDIS: Protecting European Biodiversity from Invasive Alien Species
Partner organization:	Office de l'Environnement de la Corse – Corsican Agency of Environment (OEC)
Other partner organisations involved (if relevant):	NONE
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NUTS2 region:	Corsica (FRM0)
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Part II – Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

Investment for Growth and Jobs programme	o
European Territorial Cooperation programme	o
Other regional development policy instrument	X
<p>Name of the policy instrument addressed:</p> <p>Original Policy instrument addressed: Operational Programme ERDF-ESF CORSICA 2014-2020</p> <p>Policy instrument addressed: Operational Programme ERDF-ESF CORSICA 2021-2027</p>	

Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

Strategic development pathway

The intentional or accidental introduction of animals and plants is an ancient phenomenon which has experienced an unprecedented acceleration in recent decades in the history of mankind. Globalization and the increase in trade are now favoring the arrival and establishment of many so-called "exotic" species in territories where they were previously absent. Of these, only a few have the potential to become invasive. In this case, the proliferation of these new arrivals can pose significant ecological, economic, social or health problems. The introduction of invasive alien species (IAS) is now recognized as one of the most important causes of biodiversity loss worldwide. The impact and the fight against these organisms cost nations hundreds of billions of euros each year.

With more than 12,000 recorded introduced species, Europe is far from being spared from this phenomenon. The risk is particularly significant in the Mediterranean and island regions bordering France and Italy. Indeed, this geographical area brings together many factors that greatly favor the arrival and establishment of new IAS: the importance and development of human and goods exchanges, the effects of climate change, the similarity of environments ... Corsica, located in the heart of this territory also considered a biodiversity hot spot, is particularly sensitive to these threats given the originality of its flora and fauna. Indeed, its local ecosystems have been isolated for a very long time from the continent and marked by particularly high rates of endemism.

Also, and for several decades, the Corsican Environment Office (OEC) has been involved in actions to combat and monitor invasive organisms. Through its various services and in particular the "Terrestrial biodiversity" service and the National Botanical Conservatory of Corsica (CBNC), our public establishment works in particular in favor of the conservation of invertebrates and terrestrial plants threatened by IAS.

Today, given the globalization of issues, it seems necessary to extend the efforts led regionally to an interregional and cross-border scale in order to ensure a truly efficient control and surveillance policy in the short and long term. Indeed, invasive species know no borders. Synergistic work and the exchange of experiences with our close neighbors are therefore essential to obtain significant and lasting results.

In order to respond to these challenges, the OEC is therefore now involved in new partnerships and joint actions with political and scientific representatives of the main border regions of Corsica with the ALIEM project, and even beyond with the INVALIDIS project.

In Corsica, although there are surveillance networks, there was no legislative means to regulate the entry of species into the territory.



The goal here was therefore to look into the development of a law allowing these entry management measures. This is one of the lessons learned from the program. Indeed, it would appear obvious that acquiring a strong legislative tool is one of the objectives of the INVALIDIS project.

ACTION I. Knowledge improvement

1. The background

There is no doubt about the presence of invasive alien species in Corsica. But it appears important before any management measures to identify and locate these species. To identify and act on these species, experts and local authorities must have access to a database containing all the information necessary to understand the exotic species present in the territory: location, biology, example of actions and bibliography. Based on the already existing database examples like the European Alien Species Information Network (EASIN Catalogue), the Global Invasive Species Database (GISD), and the European Alien Species Database (DAISIE), a regional database could be set up in Corsica.

2. Action

Objective 1. Establish lists of Invasive Alien Species present in Corsica

Differentiated lists of species invasive alien species must therefore be established and updated regularly. These lists should consider the risks of the appearance of exotic species present in nearby regions (Sardinia, Italy, the south of France).

It is important to pool reflections by setting up working groups on the subject in order to establish the most exhaustive lists possible, in particular on invasive alien species emerging. These lists should be prioritized according to the level of harm to human health, the economy and the environment in order to simplify management and select priority species.

The actions to be taken are as follows:

- Establish working groups specific to each biological compartment (flora, fauna, entomofauna, ichthyofauna);
- Write the lists for each compartment following the recommendations of the experts.

Objective 2. Improve knowledge on the biology and impact of IAS

Lack of basic knowledge on the biology of invasive alien species and on the scientific quantification of their impacts is an obstacle to the coordinated management of IAS. Thus, research programs must be set up in order to better define the main orientations and actions to be carried out on given IAS. The actions to be taken are as follows:

- Write bibliographic summaries on target species;
- Carry out research on innovative management of IAS;
- Work on assessing the impact of these species.

Objective 3. Centralize knowledge

A centralized database should be set up. From this database, a cartography population dynamic of invasive exotic flora and fauna would be generated in order to bring to the knowledge of all population trends. The actions to be taken are as follows:

- Identify existing databases;
- Harmonize information feedback;
- Make an IAS database accessible.

3. Players involved

- Corsican Environment Office: Coordinator and editor
- Regional Directorate for the Environment, Planning and Housing of Corsica: representative of the State in Corsica
- National Botanical Conservatory of Corsica: botanical expert, in charge of monitoring invasive exotic plant species
- Corsican Insect Conservatory Observatory: entomological expert
- Conservatory of Natural Areas of Corsica: faunistic expert
- Members of the Corsican Executive Council: representing the deliberative body of Corsica
- University of Corsica: scientists specializing in each specialty
- French Biodiversity Office: responsible for National Action Plans
- Regional Health Agency: responsible for monitoring emerging diseases
- Regional pest defence federation: actor in IAS management

4. Timeframe

Objective 1. End of 2021 – Early 2022

Objective 2. Continuous action throughout the program

Objective 3. End of 2022 – Early 2023

5. Costs

Not yet identified

6. Funding

Funding will come mainly from the Corsica region but aid from the European Union within the framework of another INTERREG program may be considered such as ALIEM 2. Contact for

the ALIEM 2 program began with the 5th Interreg Mairittimo call for projects. Most of the work was done by October 2020 for an application submission on February 17, 2021. The program is in Axis 2 Lot 3 Priority 6C of the call for projects. ALIEM 2 will follow on from the ALIEM program and will take inspiration from the good practice guide written by the Romanian partners of the INVALIDIS program. This guide to good practices proposes in particular different categories of actions generally used in the management of invasive alien species, in particular the establishment of surveillance networks. As part of ALIEM 2, for example, we will work on territory surveillance networks (invasive beetles including black agave weevil, boxwood moth or Asian hornet) and test the implementation of monitoring and alert systems, intended for the network of actors.

The issue of Invasive Alien Species being more prevalent and current than ever as the INVALIDIS project helps to highlight, the OEC has chosen to continue its involvement in the ALIEM project as a leader, via the submission of a new project, ALIEM "apostrophe" or ALIEM 2. Within particular the example of virtual field visits and other dematerialized operations carried out by INVALIDIS, it was decided to adapt the new project to the health context (maximum dematerialization). The stated goal is to move towards an operational translation of the cross-border strategy developed within the framework of the first ALIEM (Transfrontier Strategic Plan) and to provide elements for the implementation of the action plan to be developed by INVALIDIS. At a minimum, it is planned to digitize the ALIEM tools already available (brochures, educational kit, traveling exhibition, etc.) and to produce new ones, centralized by the ALIEM cross-border platform, which will evolve into a real information and communication center. 'alert, in order to "apostrophize" even more effectively our target audiences, including stakeholders of course. It is also planned to produce a Cross-border Strategic Plan which will include an Enriched Cross-border Joint Action Plan ("PACTE", in french) compatible with the INVALIDIS action plan, which will be scalable to consider the gains generated by the pilot actions. carried out during the project, of course implemented, and which could be used for capitalization.

Considering the new territorial competences in matters of IAS of the Collectivity of Corsica, which appointed the OEC to implement them, an approach by action plans carried out in synergy will constitute an indisputable asset for the action of Corsica in the matter.

ACTION II. Drafting and implementation of lists of species prohibited from introduction into Corsica

1. The background

The lack of a clear and effective policy on the management of Invasive Alien Species was a black spot in the management of the environment in Corsica. Indeed, in recent years, many exotic species have been observed in Corsica. Their entry into the territory was not regulated. It was therefore necessary to work on a way to manage entries to the island, knowing that the entry points for these species are clearly identified (only ports and airports can allow passage of these species). This is one of the lessons learned from the program through activities A.1. In July 2019, a law amended the French Environment Code, which enabled Corsica to acquire the power to create lists of animal or plant species whose introduction is formally prohibited on the territory.

This law modifies articles L411-5 and L411-6 and entered into force in January 2020, which was the essential step to decline competence at the regional level.

2. Action

Objective 1. Acquire the competence to act

The first step was to obtain the competence to work on this modification of the law: on March 24, 2021, a deliberation of the Assembly of Corsica (our management authority) entrusts the Office of the Environment of Corsica with a mission aiming to prepare the decisions of the President of the Executive Council of Corsica, responsible for establishing the list of animal and plant species prohibited from introduction into Corsica (Deliberation n° 21/034 CP). The deliberations of the Corsican Assembly concerning environmental policies are prepared by the Corsican Environment Office, partner of the INVALIDIS program.

During the workshop organized in Ajaccio, Corsica, members of the Corsican Assembly were present and were able to discuss with the various partners of the project. This subsequently enabled agents from the Corsican Environment Office to propose concrete measures to the Corsican political body and to have them voted on. In particular, the Corsican Environment Office drew ideas from Activity A1.1. of the program which compares policies on the management of invasive alien species. For example, the OEC was inspired by the Legislative Decree 230/2017 of Lombardy, Italy, which prohibits the introduction or transit through Italian territory, detention, rearing and cultivation, transport, sale or marketing, use, assignment free of charge or exchange, reproduction or spontaneous growth or release into the environment of IAS. We can also take an example from Article 12 of the main Biodiversity Law in Greece (Law 3937/2011). The latter requires the drafting of a national list of IAS and the adoption and

implementation of appropriate plans for their efficient management. In addition, the policy includes a system for granting permits, comprising methods and criteria, for the introduction of IAS under controlled conditions when there are specific economic, social or health-related reasons.

Objective 2. Bring together the relevant actors

The second phase is the creation of a working group bringing together experts from each specialist (plants, insects and other animals), members of the Corsican executive council, members of trade associations (florists, animal shops, etc.). Dealing effectively with the problem of biological invasions requires multidisciplinary and cross-regional collaboration in research activities, scientific information exchanges and management of alien species. For the moment we are at this stage, we are trying to identify the resource persons. The work carried out with INVALIDIS stakeholders is also very important to us. The various surveys carried out during the program, in particular that of activity A.1.3. allowed us to better target needs and resource people in different areas ranging from protected areas to municipalities. Our stakeholders also participate in various monitoring networks and bring their field experience, also allowing us to target strategic species on which to intervene.

Objective 3. Carry out the blacklists considering all the economic and environmental compartments of Corsica

The third step is to draw up with the working groups the lists of species prohibited from introduction into Corsica. This is the first step that will take us the most time. The goal is to create a list allowing traders to continue working in good conditions but also to protect our environment.

Objective 4. Legislative and administrative validation of lists

The fourth step is to have these lists validated by the Corsican Assembly and to promulgate them through a motion of the Assembly and to enforce these lists.

3. Players involved

- Corsican Environment Office: Coordinator and editor
- Regional Directorate for the Environment, Planning and Housing of Corsica: representative of the State in Corsica
- National Botanical Conservatory of Corsica: botanical expert, in charge of monitoring invasive exotic plant species
- Corsican Insect Conservatory Observatory: entomological expert

- Conservatory of Natural Areas of Corsica: faunistic expert
- Members of the Corsican Executive Council: representing the deliberative body of Corsica
- Dealer representative: economic aspect
- University of Corsica: scientists specializing in each specialty
- French Biodiversity Office: responsible for National Action Plans

This list is not final and could expand. Note that several people from each organization are invited to participate in these working groups.

4. Timeframe

Objective 1. March 21, 2021: deliberation of the Assembly of Corsica

Objective 2. End of 2021: identification and establishment of working groups on the elaboration of the lists

Objective 3. End of 2022: lists drawn up and validated

Objective 4. Early 2023 – Mid 2023: Validation by the Corsican Assembly, establishment and enforcement of the lists

5. Costs

None

6. Funding

None

ACTION III. Limit the spread and arrival of new species and restore ecosystems

1. The background

To anticipate or even avoid the arrival of new invasive alien species in the Region or in areas still free, it is necessary to monitor potential corridors and exotic species expanding in the region and surrounding areas. As learned in the INVALIDIS program good practice guide, these activities may take the form of field research, official border controls, and quarantine measures (usually a combination of different surveillance activities) and are aimed at preventing and minimizing the risk of introducing alien species that could become invasive and most importantly protecting particularly vulnerable areas with fragile natural ecosystems and native species under threat. Regarding flora, the National Botanical Conservatories will monitor non-native species. The update regular lists will aim to alert managers and stakeholders of the environment to the problematic species. For fauna, many national and regional structures will have to be questioned, in the objective of producing a summary resulting from the aggregation of the data available in each structure.

Also, as we could see during our virtual visit in Lombardy, it appears important to restore the ecosystems impacted by IAS and to promote the population by local species. These are actions included in the 2021-2027 Corsica Region State Plan Contract aimed at protecting the genetic diversity of local species which is linked to the Operational Program ERDF-ESF CORSICA 2021-2027. The document was finalized in March 2021 and is currently being validated by the authorities of the French State. It is following the work of the OEC on invasive alien species that the notion of IAS is present in this document. Through this document, we will implement the actions of the INVALIDIS action plan as well as the actions of ALIEM 2.

2. Actions

Objective 1. Develop watch networks at different scales

Managing invasive alien plants includes anticipation the arrival of new species on the territory, or new stations of species already recorded elsewhere in the territory. Indeed, the monitoring the distribution of new outbreaks or species makes it possible to limit upstream management efforts. A risk analysis associated with monitoring network makes it possible to anticipate the risk of invasion and define the preventive management measures to be put in place. The actions to be taken are as follows:

- Identify the actors already carrying out an environmental watch;
- Group information within the same structure;
- Take quick actions in response of a new specie arrival.

Objective 2. Develop and promote good practices for restoration of ecosystems and the use of local species

The introduction or dispersal of an invasive alien species is most often the result of ignorance of colonized sites and the implementation of management measures without considering specific to the IAS issue favouring their dispersion. The creation of information tools, at destination project owners responsible for civil engineering or restoration of natural environments, promulgating good practices would thus prevent the spread of exotic species invasive.

This operation will also make it possible to promote the suppliers of local plants and involve them during renaturation work after management actions on sites colonized by invasive alien species. The actions to be taken are as follows:

- Define and establish a substitution list local species;
- Recommend measures preventive measures aimed at limit disturbances;
- Promote the label local plant “Corsica Grana” in planting work /revegetation.

3. Players involved

- Corsican Environment Office: Coordinator and editor
- Regional Directorate for the Environment, Planning and Housing of Corsica: representative of the State in Corsica
- National Botanical Conservatory of Corsica: botanical expert, in charge of monitoring invasive exotic plant species
- Corsican Insect Conservatory Observatory: entomological expert
- University of Corsica: scientists specializing in each specialty
- French Biodiversity Office: responsible for National Action Plans
- Regional Health Agency: responsible for monitoring emerging diseases
- Regional pest defence federation: actor in IAS management

4. Timeframe

Objective 1. Mid 2022

Objective 2. Continuous action throughout the program

5. Costs

Not yet planned



6. Funding

The funding will be charged to the Corsican Environmental Office.

Signature and stamp

DATE: 22/09/2021

NAME AND JOB TITLE: Guy Armanet, Président

SIGNATURE:



STAMP OF THE ORGANISATION (if available):