



LIFE INVASAQUA - Aquatic Invasive Alien
Species of Freshwater and Estuarine Systems:
Awareness and Prevention in the Iberian
Peninsula

LIFE17 GIE/ES/000515



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Contact details:

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Project description:

Background

The introduction of invasive alien species (IAS) is a leading cause of species endangerment and extinction in freshwater systems. IAS cost the EU approximately €12 billion per year, with damage costs continuing to increase. In 2014, the EU passed an ambitious legislative framework on IAS regulation which, if implemented and executed, could be a crucial step towards reaching the targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020.

The rivers, lakes and estuaries of Spain and Portugal have an endemic rich diversity which is seriously threatened by the presence of a high number of IAS. Among the main reasons for the spread of these species are recreational fisheries, water drainage transfers and ornamental activities, all of which are important economically. However, there is a limited understanding of the threats posed by alien species in aquatic ecosystems. This lack of awareness among the Spanish and Portuguese public hampers any management policies that public administrations and other stakeholders propose, particularly for IAS that do not affect human health or major economic interests. Furthermore, IAS control is frequently considered a limitation to economic development.

Objectives

LIFE INVASAQUA seeks to reduce the introduction and spread of invasive alien species in the Iberian Peninsula by increasing public and stakeholder awareness, and developing key tools to improve an early warning and rapid response (EWRR) framework for new IAS in freshwater and estuarine habitats. This will involve

creating synergies between scientists, NGOs and decision-makers, training key target groups (river and estuary workers and users, teachers, students, etc.) to enable early warning of and rapid response to aquatic IAS. Public awareness of the threat these species pose will be raised through a far-reaching communication campaign.

The project will support the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and the EU Regulation on the prevention and management of IAS.

Expected results:

- Effective implementation of the EU Regulation on IAS, by involving at least 50 stakeholders in the development of long-term actions in the Trans-Iberian strategy for IAS, and improving the capacity of 500 decision-makers to the implement IAS management measures;
- Improved effectiveness of the Iberian EWRR systems, by creating synergies between stakeholders through long term cooperation and data exchange at national and trans-national level. Special sessions and workshops on IAS held in at least five international congresses with more than 500 participants;
- Adoption of codes of conduct and best practices by key target groups (240 surveillance agents and river/estuary users, 40 teachers/academics and 100 enterprises);
- Some 120 professionals, 50 museum/aquarium members, 500 teachers and academics, and more than 500 volunteers trained to actively participate in EWRR systems for IAS. The establishment of an app and an Iberian web platform for collecting georeferenced data (at least 10 000 observations uploaded). The participation of at least 2 000 students in events and international forums;
- Development of fieldwork projects in 50 education centres;
- Increased public information and awareness of the general public. More than 100 activities planned with a potential reach of more than 200 000 people, including the development of a museum exhibition;
- Overall, a 10% increase in Spanish and Portuguese people's awareness of IAS.

Results

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Environmental issues addressed:

Target EU Legislation

- Nature protection and Biodiversity
- COM(2011) 244 final “Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 ...
- Regulation 1143/2014 - Prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien ...

Natura 2000 sites

Not applicable

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Beneficiaries:

Coordinator	Universidad de Murcia
Type of organisation	University
Description	The University of Murcia is a public body of higher education with around 34 000 students and 2 500 teaching staff, spread over five campuses. The department of zoology and physical anthropology, which is responsible for the coordination of this LIFE project, works with experts in invasive alien species with experience in previous LIFE projects related to aquatic species.
Partners	Associação Portuguesa de Educação Ambiental, Portugal Agencia EFE S.A.U., S.M.E., Spain Agencia Estatal Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Spain Sociedad Ibérica de Ictiología, Spain Universidade de Évora, Portugal Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Spain Universidad de Navarra, Spain Unión Internacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza y los Recursos Naturales, Spain

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Administrative data:

Project reference	LIFE17 GIE/ES/000515
Duration	01-NOV-2018 to 31-OCT -2023
Total budget	3,075,139.00 €
EU contribution	1,844,656.00 €
Project location	Galicia(España) Asturias(España) Cantabria(España) País Vasco(España) Navarra(España) Rioja(España) Aragón(España) Madrid(España) Castilla-León(España) Castilla-La Mancha(España) Extremadura(España) Cataluña(España) Comunidad Valenciana(España) Balears(España) Andalucía(España)

Murcia(España) Ceuta y Melilla(España)
Canarias(España) Norte(Portugal)
Centro(Portugal) Lisboa e vale do Tejo(Portugal)
Alentejo(Portugal) Algarve(Portugal)
Açores(Portugal) Madeira(Portugal)

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