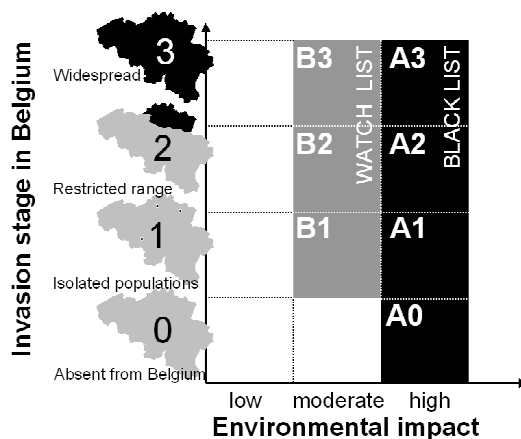


Project description

Alterias (IAS for Invasive Alien Species) is a communication project which aims at educating the horticultural sector on the invasive plants (IP) issue, by implementing raising awareness actions and preventive measures in order to reduce introductions of those plants in garden, parks, green areas and along roads, rail and waterways network. It is a nature conservation project which targets actors of the ornamental sector, meaning horticulture professionals (nursery men, garden contractors, public and private green managers, public department responsible for plantation, garden centers), garden amateurs and horticultural schools. These actors will be actively consulted in order to propose concrete solutions, in a participative approach beneficial both for environment and the horticulture industry. The project will run throughout Belgium (Wallonia, Flanders, Brussels region). The project is supported by horticultural federations (FWH and AVBS).

The project mainly focuses on terrestrial and aquatic invasive plants considered as detrimental to the environment. Those plants have been analysed by scientists and classified in a system of black list and watch list.



Varied communication tools shall be used in order to reach our public target : website, animation of information sessions, production of a DVD, articles in journals and horticultural magazines, publication of brochures, folders, posters, participation in horticultural events, communication with media (radio and TV reportages), etc.

Project organisation

Duration	4 years (January 2010 – December 2013)
Coordinator	Biodiversity & Landscape Unit (Liège University – Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech) ¹
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research Center for Ornamental plants – Destelbergen (PCS) - Horticultural Technical Center – Gembloux (CTH) - Federal Public Service – Public Health, Food chain safety and Environment (FPS - PHFCE)
Cofinanciers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Commission - Wallonia Public Service – Agriculture, Natural Ressources and Environment - Agency for Nature and Forests (ANB) - Brussel Institute for Environment Management (IBGE-BIM)

This project is supported and cofinanced by the LIFE + program of the European Commission.

¹ Formerly named Laboratory of Ecology, Gembloux Agricultural University.

Objectives

- Make aware ornamental plant users on the IP issue by delivering relevant informations through varied communication channels ;
- Collaborate with the horticultural sector to identify alternatives and best practices in prevention ;
- Guide these actors to implement those measures in a self-regulation approach.

Actions

The project will be organized through three main awareness raising campaigns (campaigns languages will be French and Dutch):

- **Action 1.** General awareness raising campaign (2010-2011)

General information will be delivered on IP : nature of the problem, threats for environment, impacts, actors involved, solutions proposed. This campaign will be conducted during the first half of the project to widely sensitise the three project target audiences (ornamental horticulture professionals, teachers and garden amateurs) to the following key message: "some non-native plants make a threat for biodiversity. They may escape from garden, parks and invade natural habitats. Information and prevention is economically and ecologically better than controlling populations in nature".

Attention will be drawn specifically to consequences of biological invasions for biodiversity, which plant species are invasive in Belgium and how they spread in the environment. A second campaign related to the codes of conduct (action 2) will be carried out during the second part of the project.

- **Action 2.** Development of codes of conduct (2011-2012)

A second awareness raising campaign will be conducted during the second half of the project amongst the horticulture professionals to widely promote the Belgian code of conduct. This code will be developed with the horticultural sector, to favor the use of alternative plants and to communicate about best practices to reduce the risks of invasive plants release in the environment (e.g. trade, plant waste management, voluntary plantations, soil transport). Professionals from horticulture federations will be especially at target as they will be invited to endorse the practices detailed in the Belgian code of conduct.

- **Action 3.** Invasive plants at schools (2011-2012)

This third awareness campaign aims at turning horticultural teachers into multipliers of the key messages of the Alterias project and secure awareness raising on the long term in the whole country. Teachers will be trained during specific information sessions organised in parallel to action 2 and will receive a toolkit including the communication material produced by the project.

Contacts

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