

Minutes

3rd Meeting of the Invasive Alien Species Working Group
(sub-group of the Co-ordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature E02210)

Thursday 8 June 2017, Brussels

1. Approval of the agenda

COM welcomed the participants to the meeting. The agenda (Annex 1) was adopted without any changes.

2. Nature of the meeting

This was the 3rd meeting of the IAS Working Group, composed of Member State authorities, organisations and individual experts. The meeting was not public.

3. List of points discussed

ITEM 2: Presentation by the Commission on the latest developments in the implementation of the Regulation (EU) 1143/2014 on invasive alien species (IAS Regulation)

COM informed that the next step in the implementation of the IAS Regulation would be the vote on the Implementing act on the 1st update of the list of IAS of Union concern and the Implementing act on technical formats for reporting at the IAS Committee on 19 June 2017. Furthermore, the Delegated act on the methodology of risk assessments was planned to enter the Inter-Service Consultation soon.

COM presented the 11 taxa proposed for the 2nd update of the list. The Scientific Forum will give its opinion on the underpinning risk assessments at the 5th meeting foreseen to take place in autumn 2017. The IAS Committee will then discuss these at its next meeting planned for the 4th quarter of 2017 and could have a vote on the 2nd update of the list in the 2nd quarter of 2018. The deadline for proposals for the 3rd update of the list is 10 February 2018.

For all species that are currently on the Union list, the obligations set out in the IAS Regulation apply. By the first months of 2018 Member States will need to have analysed the pathways of unintentional introduction and spread, establish a surveillance system and have in place management measures for the widely spread species. The successful rapid eradication of the Asian hornet in the UK and BE shows that the Regulation starts working.

COM informed that the Joint Research Centre (JRC) is supporting the work on IAS through the European Alien Species Information Network (EASIN)¹, which is an online platform that aims to facilitate the exploration of existing information on alien species from distributed sources. It includes a map viewer of the distribution of over 14.000 alien species. JRC will

¹ <http://easin.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

also publish soon a report² on the baseline distribution of the current 37 IAS of Union concern.

The JRC has also developed an app allowing citizens to help monitor the distribution of the IAS of Union concern. The source code will be released soon in order to allow MS competent authorities to add species of national concern.

COM provided the following explanations in response to questions by the members:

- About 100 reports have been received through the IAS app so far. JRC is currently establishing a validation method to verify the information received.
- The Member States (MS) with outermost regions are working on revising existing or creating new lists of IAS of concern for those regions. COM is following up on this. Denmark informed the group that their revised national IAS strategy includes a proposal for a list of IAS of national concern.
- COM has not yet given any authorisation under Article 9 of the Regulation and no request has been received so far. To COM's knowledge, no MS has issued any permit yet. Member States are obliged to make publicly available on the internet information on all permits that they have issued. Denmark informed the group that they had issued permits for research with *Trachemys scripta* and would soon make this information available online as well.
- Zoos can keep their species as long as they live in contained holdings without being able to reproduce. While generally ex-situ conservation could be a reason to apply for a permit, the view of COM is that this would only apply if the species in question is threatened in its native environment. This is not the case for any of the currently listed species.
- Currently, out of the 95 species that have been identified through the horizon scanning exercise there is only one species on the Union list. COM confirmed that it takes into account the horizon scanning report when committing the development of new risk assessments. Experience up to now has shown that it is often difficult to make a comprehensive risk assessment fulfilling the criteria of the IAS Regulation, as scientists often cannot find enough scientific evidence for these species.
- There are some freshwater species on the list but no marine species. The upcoming entry into force of the Ballast Water Convention is expected to help the discussions for inclusions of marine species on the Union list.
- The group pointed out that (re-)releasing of specimens as a method used to locate populations in the wild (release of Asian hornet in order to trace a nest, release of raccoon dogs with GPS transmitters in order to trace groups in the wild). COM considers that this could be legitimate under the framework of management measures, while a permit is not relevant as permits concern activities in contained holdings.

² The report is in the meantime published and available here:
<https://easin.jrc.ec.europa.eu/Documentation/Baseline>

COM would discuss this further at the next meeting of the Committee as well. COM invited the group to submit information on relevant experiences and to include it in the document on management measures.

- Transitional provisions allowing people to keep their pets as long as they live, provided that they cannot reproduce or escape, do not apply for plants. Emptying an aquarium in a water body is a main pathway of invasive freshwater plants and awareness raising is needed in order to prevent this. The issue of communication needs to be taken up by the competent authorities.
- JRC is developing a webpage on citizen science displaying several projects and links to citizen science associations. One limiting factor to the EU wide use of any application is the language.
- The group pointed out that lot of work has already been done (e.g. Codes of Conduct by the Bern Convention) and the sector organisations have an important role in raising awareness. It would be useful if material from various sources was made available at a single place. COM confirmed that it could host on CIRCABC material if provided by the members with a license to do so in order to avoid problems of property rights. Members can make available any type of material. Photos of species at various stages to be used in training and communication material would be most useful.

ITEM 3: Presentations by the group members on the three draft documents

A representative of each of the sub-groups that co-drafted the documents presented their key points. A discussion took place after each presentation. All three documents were well received by the group. COM warmly thanked all those involved in producing the drafts.

- Pathway analysis and action plans

The draft document outlines the main work available on pathways analysis and guidance and some case studies on pathway analysis and action plans. The use of the pathway classification by the Convention of Biological Diversity is recommended. Limitations identified were gaps of knowledge on how IAS are being introduced and how different pathways are interlinked. A key recommendation in this draft document is that Member States should consider expanding the scope of pathway analysis beyond the required minimum obligation under Article 13 of the IAS Regulation to include also intentional introduction of species and introduction of non-listed species. The group agreed that this approach would be most meaningful since a pathway analysis on the basis of the listed species only would be too narrow. The group also appreciated that going beyond the minimum obligations would be difficult due to lack of resources. The group suggested some rearranging of the draft in order to start from clarifying the legal requirements before discussing the recommendation for work beyond these.

The question about the future usage of the document was raised. COM replied that it is already publicly available on CIRABC so that even before its finalisation, it is available to the IAS Committee for consultative purposes. Getting it adopted as COM guidelines will take some time and it should be a living document that can be updated regularly.

- Presentation: Surveillance of invasive alien species of Union concern

The draft document provides principles, approach options and standards regarding IAS surveillance. Four levels of surveillance were identified and recommended, ranging from mandatory public authority surveillance programmes, public authority regulated systems, voluntary stakeholder group surveillance to citizen science surveillance.

Gaps identified in surveillance and pathway analysis were in relation to tourism, e-commerce and animal fairs. Suggestions from the group on improving the document were:

- introducing a link to inspections
 - expanding the last paragraph into a table
 - including references to relevant work of the Bern Convention
 - considering the Member States' reporting obligations, particular making a distinction of very common species and those that are not common i.e. more difficult to be recorded
 - Divers should be mentioned as well in relation to marine protected areas (p.7)
 - Malta and Sweden offered to provide more examples to be included in the document (MT alien fish application, SE project on harbour surveillance of marine species, OSPAR/HELCOM work on implementation of BWC)
 - examples of e-DNA use to be added if possible.
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- Presentation: Management of IAS of Union Concern

The draft document identifies general principles, best practices and lessons learnt. When selecting measures, the proportionality of the impact on the environment, the social and administrative feasibility, and a cost benefit analysis should be considered. The IAS Regulation allows for commercial use of IAS of Union concern as part of the management measures but risks should be taken into account. Another key issue was awareness and understanding among concerned stakeholders and more information would be needed on restoration measures.

Due to time limitations and few contributions, the document has a thorough part on animal management, and a strong emphasis on animal welfare concerns but lacks information on plants. Several members volunteered to provide additional information and case studies on plant management. It was pointed out to be aware of the side effects of some management measures. Members were also encouraged to provide examples of problems encountered e.g. failure of management actions because of private owners refusing access.

Depending on the further contributions to the document, the final version could refer to both animal and plant species or could be reduced to a document on management of animal species/animal welfare considerations.

ITEM 4: AOB

The next steps in the work of the group were discussed. COM confirmed its willingness to keep the group operating, as it is the only place where COM, MS and stakeholders come together and announced that it will soon issue a new call for Membership. It would be good to plan meetings earlier in advance in order to facilitate the participation of stakeholders outside

Brussels. The group asked COM to investigate use of teleconference facilities and suggested to invite experts on certain specific topics to enrich the discussions.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

See above.

5. Next steps

Comments on the three documents should be sent by 31 July 2017 to the respective group leader. The sub-groups then have until the end of September 2017 to finalize the documents. Then the final version will be presented in the following IAS Committee meeting.

The group identified the following possible topics of work after completion of these documents:

- awareness raising
- sharing of good practices
- commercial use of IAS as part of the management measures.

All group members are kindly requested to make available for further free re-use, translations etc. of material in relation to the listed species, especially photos of the listed species in all stages that can be used in training and communication material. COM will host any shared material on CIRCABC. Links to existing online material can be made available as well.

As the mandate of the group is coming to an end, COM will launch a new call after the summer 2017 to continue the work of this group. Current members will need to reapply since renewal of membership is not automatic.

As COM intends to produce additional risk assessments, it encouraged the members to submit by end of September proposals for species to be considered for a risk assessment. .

6. Next meeting

The next meeting has not been scheduled yet.

7. List of participants

MEMBER of the group	Individual person attended
BirdLife International	D. Heptinstall
Eurogroup for animals	I. Di Silvestre
European Anglers Alliance (EAA)	E. Smith
FACE - European Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation	M. Anane
GB Non-Native Species Secretariat Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)	N. Moore

HeidelbergCement	C. Jewell
IFAW - International Fund for Animal Welfare	S. McLennan
Luxembourg, Ministère du Développement durable et des Infrastructures	T. De Sousa
Malta Environment and Resources Authority	B. Christie, M. Szuta
Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark	H. Nyegaard Hvid
Natural Resources Institute Finland	L.Urho
European Pet Organisation and Ornamental Fish International	N. Gamain
Service publique de Wallonie (Belgium)	D. Gosse
Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Administration	S. Brockmark
Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	M. Josefsson
WWF Spain	L. Moreno Luiz

Annex 1

<p>3RD MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES (WGIAS)</p> <p>8 JUNE 2017 FROM 9:00 TO 18:30</p> <p>AT AVENUE DE BEAULIEU 5, 1160 BRUSSELS</p> <p>ROOM BU-5 0/C</p> <p>(CLOSEST METRO STATION BEAULIEU)</p>
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AGENDA

Point	Timing	Description	Documents	Action
		Arrival		
1	9:00 am	Opening and Welcome Adoption of the agenda	<i>Draft Agenda</i>	Adoption
2	9:15 am	Latest developments in the implementation of the Regulation (EU) 1143/2014 on invasive alien species <i>Presentation by IAS-team</i>		Information and discussion
3	9:45 am	Discussion on the three draft documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathway management³ • Surveillance of IAS of Union concern⁴ • Management of IAS of Union concern⁵ 	<i>Documents will be made available on CIRCABC, please see links in footnotes</i>	Working session
	13:00 am	Lunch break		
3	14:00 pm	Continuation		Continuation of working session
4	17:00 pm	Next steps AOB		Discussion
	18:30 pm	End of the day		

³ <https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/ff3ee92e-c312-4299-bdad-2d836e1ab1e5>

⁴ <https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/94cf7f81-1a14-4306-85ca-678f3acf5a3a>

⁵ <https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/6109dd04-716c-48a2-b91c-5a6b2d90a314>