



# LAYMAN'S REPORT

## LIFE15 GIE/IT/001039 - LIFE ASAP "Alien Species Awareness Program"

coordinating beneficiary



associated beneficiaries



co-financiers



# INVASIVE SPECIES

## WHAT ARE THEY?

**Alien species** are those species carried by humans voluntarily or accidentally outside their area of origin. Among the plants, for example, the ***Robinia pseudoacacia*** or acacia, one of the most common trees in our cities and countryside, is an alien species: native to the south-eastern United States, it was introduced in 1601 in France as an ornamental tree by gardeners of King Louis XIII and was then used throughout Europe both in gardens and for land consolidation. Among the animals, even the very common ***Silurus glanis***, now present in all our rivers, is an alien species: native to Eastern Europe and Western Asia, it was introduced in Italy from the beginning of the 1950s onwards for sport fishing. .

Some of the alien species that successfully settle in the area in which they are introduced spread rapidly causing serious damage to the species and ecosystems native to that place, often accompanied by economic repercussions and health problems. These species are called invasive alien species or IAS, which stands for Invasive Alien Species.

Not all alien species are invasive, only those that in the introduction area find the optimal conditions to reproduce and spread, causing ecological, economic and health damage become so. **It is estimated that for every 100 alien species that arrive in an area, only one becomes invasive.**



# INVASIVE SPECIES

*Why do some species introduced to a new area become invasive?*



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The success of the invasion is due to a combination of factors ranging from the biological and ecological characteristics of the incoming species and which can make it more competitive than the native ones. Other factors can be completely random such as the temperatures or rainfall that occur in the period of arrival of the new species.

The **water hyacinth**, freshwater plant originating from the Amazon River basin and introduced in Europe as ornamental plant for ponds and small rivers, is a classic example of invasive alien species. Nowadays this plant is in fact expanded in many waterways, lakes and ponds at the expense of native aquatic plants and it is causing big problems to irrigated networks, hydroelectric and purification plants, navigation, fishing both amateur and professional.

The **tiger mosquito** is perhaps, among the animals, the best known case of invasive alien species. Originating from South-east Asia, it has been introduced accidentally and it has spread uncontrollably throughout Europe. The Tiger mosquito's bites, as we have all experienced on our skin, are very annoying and they cause sometime strong allergic and inflammatory reactions in very sensitive people. This species is very interesting from the health point of view, being responsible of the diffusion of chikungunya virus in 2007 and probably of the zika virus in very recent years.



**Reduction of the introduction rate of invasive alien species (IAS) in the Italian territory** and the mitigation of its impacts. In particular, Life ASAP aims to increase the awareness and the active participation of citizens regarding the problem of IAS and to promote the correct and efficient management of IAS by public entities in charge thanks to the full implementation of the European regulations in the field of invasive alien species (EU 1143/2014).

## How



**Training of multipliers**, in order to, in their daily work in contact with the public, spread their knowledge of correct behaviours to adopt to limit the problem of biological invasions.



**Communication campaign** for citizens with targeted actions for schools, visitors of the parks and the travellers passing



**Training of personnel** of all the public subject involved in the fulfilment of the European Regulations on the opposition against IAS (EU 1143/2014)



**Training of the scientific community** and its direct involvement in the preparation of a black list of priority invasive alien species for Italy



**Diffusion of voluntary instruments such as codes of conduct, guidelines for the management of IAS and technical handbooks**

# Numbers



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**875.000**

*people involved*

**559**

*trained multipliers*

**224**

*events*

**2394**

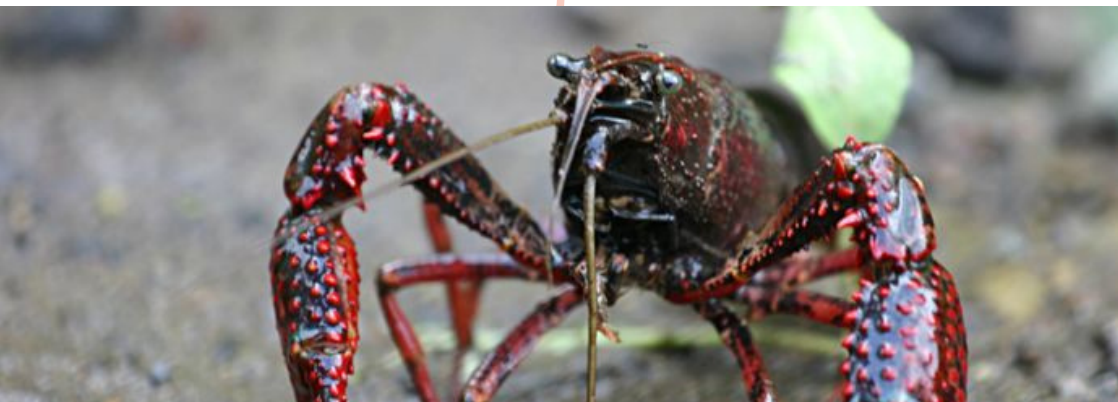
*trained professionals*

**992**

*trained public staff*

**1540**

*Alien Rangers*



# Benefici sociali



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A correct information on the impacts of invasive alien species allows, on the one hand, to reduce the intentional release of IAS in the environment and on the other hand can stimulate citizens to actively participate in citizen science activities by reporting the presence of new invasive alien species, speeding up the needed response by the competent authorities.

In fact, in case of timely reporting, IAS can be speedily eradicated limiting both environmental impact and economic damage. Furthermore, citizen science activities promote the development of volunteering and active citizenship reducing social marginality as well as distance and mistrust towards institutions.

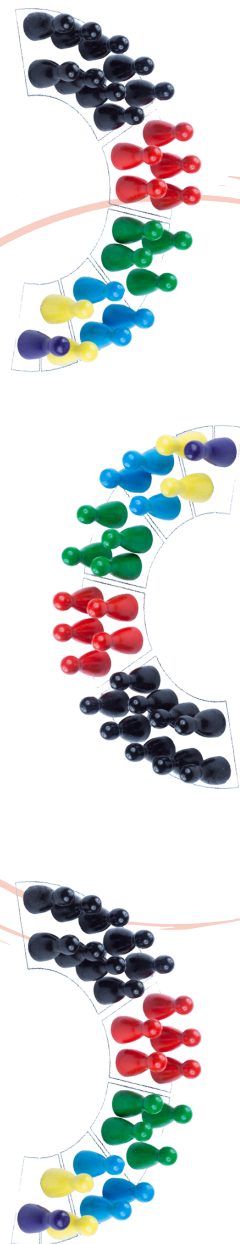


The project has been presented as part of the "Joint Committee for Biodiversity" and was used as a reference for the formation of public administrations on the different aspects of IAS.

The project provided a decisive support to the implementation of Decree 230/17, particularly in terms of capacity building and training staff of public administrations and informing citizens who hold alien species of European Union importance.

The project was mentioned in the official guidelines of the Italian Ministry of the Environment (MATTM) entitled "Guidelines for the correct holding of pet animals belonging to invasive alien species provided for by decree 230/17 art.27 paragraph 4. LIFE ASAP is it was also mentioned in the minutes of the scientific forum on IAS and the Committee on IAS set up by the EU Regulation.

Replicability activities and the training for the public officers produced initiatives undertaken by the regional administrations







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## Data Project

Project location: Italy

Project start date: 30/09/2016

Project end date: 31/07/2020

Total budget: € 3,140,305.00

EU contribution: € 1,844,005.00

## Data Beneficiary

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