



European Regulation on invasive alien species

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AS A SCIENTIST IN BELGIUM

The IAS Regulation in a nutshell

The [Regulation \(EU\) 1143/2014 on invasive alien species](#) (IAS) is all about **preventing** IAS from getting introduced and spreading, **reacting rapidly** if an incursion occurs and **mitigating damage** caused by more widespread invasives. As a scientist you are obliged to adhere to permit requirements and there are things you can do to act responsibly.

UNION LIST

The Regulation centers around **a list of impactful IAS** for which measures of prevention, rapid response and management need to be implemented by each Member State. This list of species – the **species of Union Concern** – is highly dynamic and prone to additions every few years. Consult the up-to-date version of the list [here](#).

Know your species:

- > Consult the booklet on IAS of Union Concern: [NL](#) - [FR](#)
- > Watch identification videos of aquatic plants and crayfish: [Youtube](#)
- > Consult the website of the [National Scientific Secretariat on Invasive Alien Species](#)
- > Visit the living reference collection of plants of Union Concern at Meise Botanic Garden

RESTRICTIONS AND PREVENTION

If a species gets listed, **all intentional acts with such a species are forbidden** – no more importation, transport, breeding or keeping is allowed in Europe. This also applies to any hybrids, varieties or breeds. Exceptions are possible only for scientific research or ex-situ conservation but are subject to permits. Additionally, each Member State needs to adopt an **Action plan to prevent the unintentional introduction and spread** of IAS.

IMPLEMENTATION IN BELGIUM

Addressing the threat of IAS in Belgium requires coordination and cooperation. That is why the Regions, Communities and the federal authority signed a [Cooperation agreement](#). This cooperation is facilitated by the existence of a **National Committee** as a discussion platform for representatives of the authorities, a **National Scientific Council** that pools Belgian IAS expertise for scientific advice on Belgian questions related to IAS, and a **National Scientific Secretariat** that operationalizes the coordination, and ensures the scientific support for the Committee and the Council.



Download the
Regulation (EU)
1143/2014 on
invasive alien
species (IAS) [here](#)



Consult the list
of impactful IAS
[here](#)



What are your obligations as a scientist?

→ ACQUIRE PERMITS

Whether out in the field or in the lab, if you are doing experiments on IAS of Union Concern which involve the keeping, breeding, transporting or handling of live specimens or their propagules, **you will need to apply for a permit** at the competent authority, since these activities are not allowed without a permit. You are also obliged to ensure contained holding of specimens during your research. In your application, make sure to provide adequate information on the relevance of the experiment (e.g. research on the invasion, assessing management effectiveness..) and how you will keep these species from getting out into the wild. Here are the contacts for applying for such permits:

- > **Flanders:** [link to form](#)
- > **Wallonia:** invasives@spw.wallonie.be
- > **Brussels Capital Region:** biodiv@leefmilieu.brussels
- > **Federal government** (imports/exports only): [link to form](#)

The permit requirement only applies to live specimens or propagules (e.g. gametes, seeds, eggs). In doubt on whether or not you need a permit? Contact [✉ secretariat@iasregulation.be](mailto:secretariat@iasregulation.be).

→ REPORT FIRST OBSERVATIONS

If you encounter an EU listed species previously unknown to the regional territory or are informed of such a presence by a citizen, you have the legal obligation to inform authorities immediately, by sending an email to the National Scientific Secretariat ([✉ secretariat@iasregulation.be](mailto:secretariat@iasregulation.be)). This is of utmost importance as it allows a proper response by competent authorities, including notification to Europe and other Member States (via the IAS NOTSYS portal) and to allow a rapid response. Delaying communicating on such observations is irresponsible and can compromise the effectiveness of a response. Of course, this does not prevent you to valorize your data afterwards by publishing your findings. If you are the editor of a scientific journal you can act responsibly by ensuring authors adhered to the rapid reporting obligation.

Report your observations on an online platform (e.g. waarnemingen.be, iNaturalist, OFFH) if ever you encounter any IAS in the field. This is especially important for species with very limited distribution on the territory. Thanks to a harmonized dataflow, all observations from these platforms of non-native species are then centralized on GBIF and can be used by early warning systems (e.g. <https://alert.riparias.be/>).

→ APPLY BIOSECURITY

Be hygienic! When you are out in the field performing any type of monitoring, sampling or management activity, take care to implement **proper biosecurity protocols**:

- > **check** your equipment and boots for propagules and remove mud or other matter
- > **clean** it with tap water before moving to another spot
- > equipment should be **dried**, ideally, for at least 48h before using it in another location, but if this is not possible the use of multiple sets of equipment can be considered. The use of separate sets for use in invaded areas and areas of conservation importance is highly recommended.

More information on the proper biosecurity procedures can be found on www.iasregulation.be. Hygienic measures are being implemented by many recreational and professional sectors as **part of our National Action plan on IAS**.



Consult
a summary on
permits [here](#)

If you encounter an EU listed species previously unknown to the regional territory, you have the legal obligation to inform authorities immediately.



secretariat@iasregulation.be



Learn more on
biosecurity [here](#)



Do not transport live specimens off site if you encounter a (listed) IAS during your field activities. Unless there is a real strategy in place and permits are secured, it is generally advised to not mess around with IAS that you encounter in the field and put back any bycatch that may arise from your activities.

DOING RESEARCH ON MANAGEMENT?

Competent authorities have the obligation to rapidly eradicate species whose presence on the territory was previously unknown, and to implement management plans for widespread species. You can contribute by helping in the development of new techniques but also by reporting details of management measures such as cost, effectiveness, side-effects,... Finally, when your research involves the handling of animals, you should always ensure they are spared avoidable pain or distress ([consult guide](#)) and adhere to rules and regulations with respect to the use of experimental animals in research such as getting ethics approval from your ethical commission.



Consult the manual for the management of vertebrate invasive alien species of Union concern, incorporating animal welfare [here](#)

Further questions? Contact us at  secretariat@iasregulation.be

MORE INFORMATION AND USEFUL LINKS

-  EU Regulation:
https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/invasive-alien-species_en
-  Belgian portal on IAS of Union concern:
<https://www.iasregulation.be/>

