



ACTION PLAN 2021-2023

INVALIDIS - Protecting European Biodiversity from Invasive Alien Species

Part I – General information

Project: **INVALIDIS - Protecting European Biodiversity from Invasive Alien Species**

Partner organization: **Bucharest Ilfov Regional Development Agency**

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant):NA

Country: **Romania**

NUTS2 region: Bucharest- Ilfov

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Part II – Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact: Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme

Name of the policy instrument addressed: It is envisaged to link the results of our Action Plan in relation to the next Regional Operational Programme – BI POR 2021-2027

Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

Strategic development pathway (please describe the shortages of the policy instrument, the aims of the policy measures included and the lessons learnt from the project that constitute their basis)

The initially proposed reference policy instrument for Bucharest Ilfov Regional Development Agency (ADR-BI) action plan was The Regional Operational Program Investment in Growth and Jobs ERDF 2014-2020 in Bucharest-Ilfov Region.

Regional Operational Program (ROP) has been until recently managed by the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration as Managing Authority and the priority investment axes have already been drawn up for the current implementation period.

According to Emergency Ordinance no. 122/2020 (on some measures to ensure the efficiency of the decision-making process of non-reimbursable external funds for regional development in Romania), ADR-BI will be the next Managing Authority for the Regional Operational Program (ROP) 2021-2027 for Bucharest-Ilfov region. This process of taking over this role by ADRBI is on-going and involves a complex approach in terms of the new attributions and responsibilities.

The European Regional Development Fund has already launched Regional Operational Program since 2014, the activities have therefore been planned by Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration well before the start of the Invalis project. Therefore, ERDF program is fairly advanced with most of the expenditure having taken place but in 2021 a new ERDF program will be launched. The action plan intends therefore to have a lasting impact and not to be limited to a single ERDF program.

Considering this overall framework, even if ADR BI was originally targeting the Regional Operational Programme Investment in Growth and Jobs ERDF 2014-2020 (Bucharest-Ilfov), this has proved not to be feasible any longer. Considering the fact that ADR-BI is in the process of becoming Managing Authority for ROP 2021-2027, it is highly probable to obtain the support and endorsement of the action plan from the Agency Leadership.

ADRBI developed the action plan development, although the collaboration with the stakeholders was hampered by the restrictions during this period. ADRBI is in the process of identifying the most feasible method to improve the policy instrument- the Regional Operational Programme 2021-2027.

Biological invasions are considered to be one of the greatest threats to the biodiversity and natural ecosystems. The Invalis project enabled the participating territorial authorities to address common

challenges associated with biological invasions such as knowledge gaps in ecosystems' vulnerability to biological invasions and species' distributions, lack of awareness about IAS environmental and socioeconomic risks, low level of cooperation between public authorities and key stakeholders for the implementation of IAS management measures and conflicts of interests. Therefore, we consider approaching the biodiversity dimension in reaching the new policy instrument by improving awareness about IAS environmental risks.

As a first step, we intend to reach the new policy instrument ROP 2021-2027 by including specific actions prioritizing biodiversity protection theme of the Invalis project and including the IAS criteria on the above objectives:

- improving the protection of nature and biodiversity
- improving the green infrastructure especially in urban areas.

Concerning the relationship with the new reference policy instrument ROP 2021-2027, the Regional Operational Programme includes as a priority "A friendly environmental region".

Furthermore, the stage of the new ROP 2021-2027 is still a draft version being under negotiation with the responsible bodies. It is intended that the general guidelines and farther more the specific guidelines to be finalized in 2022 and the first calls to be launched after this step is accomplished. However, there is a high degree of uncertainty, and therefore we consider that a concrete action to influence the new ROP as much as possible under the current circumstances is the development of a guide on protecting the biodiversity from IAS – as a predecessor document of the specific programme guidelines.

1. The background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

The lesson learnt from the Invalis project is "A guide to the alien plants of Greece" with reference to the NATURA 2000 Protected Areas Network. It is a valuable good practice funded by and delivered to the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (NECCA), the lead partner of Invalis Project. The printed edition of the guide regarding the alien plants of Greece is a useful tool for the stakeholders helping them to understand that biological invasion impacts and its effects are a major challenge on natural ecosystems, related to human activities and economy. The practice has a big potential of transferability in our region as a national/ local guide with local IAS plants is not yet created. Biological invasions is one of the most important threats to biodiversity and functioning of natural ecosystems in Europe (within and outside protected areas) that can cause negative consequences in ecology, economy and livelihood, degrading ecological and human societies. Such a guide is a necessary tool for policy planning across Europe.

2. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

Development of a guide on protecting the biodiversity from IAS – with specific emphasis on urban areas.

The aim of the action is to develop a guide that refers to measures that need to be implemented in reconversion of unused, degraded and abandoned lands and their transformation into green spaces and infrastructures (parks, public gardens, etc.), as well as the modernization / extension of existing green spaces aim at increasing and improving the living conditions of the citizens in the region with an emphasis on protection the biodiversity from IAS. Also, the crucial point of the guide will mainly consist on information regarding IAS systems and registries ADR-BI found out throughout the Invalis interregional learning process that has elements of transferability, especially "A guide to the alien plants of Greece". This will be used in the guide to increase awareness on biological invasions and foster effective IAS management policies as the needs addressed are common among EU regions (considering that biological invasions is a universal threat) and incurs low implementation risks .

Such a guide would help stakeholders (public administration especially) to start introduce measures for protecting the biodiversity regarding reconversion of unused, degraded and abandoned lands and their transformation into green spaces and infrastructures (parks, public gardens, etc.), as well as the modernization / extension of existing green spaces aim at increasing and improving the living conditions of the citizens.

The guide will be made available and distributed to be used by all the relevant stakeholders and interested organizations from the Bucharest-Ilfov Region, raising awareness on biological invasions at all levels. The guide is utilized as a focal point for the diffusion of information and knowledge on biological invasions at all levels, involving from staff and managers to visitors, to local communities and the general public. Awareness on IAS could furthermore be raised and strengthened via the involvement of public in the diverse activities related to the monitoring and management of IAS.

The expected result is to influence as many stakeholders as possible to take into account the guide when planning their activities related to reconversion of unused, degraded and abandoned lands and its transformation into green spaces and infrastructures as well as the modernization/extension of existing green spaces.

This action will indirectly contribute to improving the policy instrument addressed by better understanding the biological invasion and the protection of the region biodiversity from IAS. The information from the good practices included in the guide can be extremely useful to Romanian stakeholders and the potential of transferability is considerable high. The dissemination of the guide will also raise awareness among stakehoders concerning the benefits of protecting the local biodiversity.

The action is intended to influence the policy instrument by preparing the steps for the transition to IAS protection of the nature and biodiversity, hereafter better understanding of the impact of biological invasions to local environment.

The policy need that this action intends to address is to improve the way in which measures implemented by ROP actively support protecting the biodiversity from IAS invasions. Providing this guide, that includes good practices already implemented related to IAS management, to potential beneficiaries of ROP creates the premises that future grant applications are better elaborated, with higher chances of financing.

In order to address this need in a successful manner it is necessary to prepare the ground both at the level of awareness and the one of implementation knowledge. The guide is meant to push forward these

limitations by drafting future possible project's promotion and financing criterias to be implemented within the specific guides.

The guide will provide guidance for the measures included in the ROP – 2021-2027, within the priority “A friendly environmental region”.It will also support stakeholders to know the general rules under which they can apply for ROP funding and will be financed throughout Regional Development Fund.

3. Players involved (please indicate the organizations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

The first stakeholders to be involved are the decision makers, public authorities and environmental institutes, as they are the main beneficiaries of knowledge the Guide will provide.

A second category of stakeholders is represented by universities, profile NGOs and the private sector. These organizations also have an influence in protecting biodiversity processes.

Specialized regulatory agencies and bodies, like the National Agency for Environmental Protection and will have an important role, as they are involved directly on biodiversity and they will provide relevant input regarding our Guide.

During the implementation of the Invalis project, the National Agency for Environmental Protection has proven to be a vital stakeholder, being present at the project events and offering technical support and input for the activities.

Last but not least, the civil society is also intended to be part of the process.

The overall process will be managed by the Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency which is also Intermediary Body for the Regional Operational Programme Investment in Growth and Jobs ERDF 2014-2020.

4. Timeframe

The steps toward the elaboration of the Guide and the corresponding timeframe for the Phase 2 (2020-2022) of the project are:

- Semester 7

1. Assessment of the actual situation.
2. Research of relevant case studies and success stories regarding protecting biodiversity.
3. Drafting the structure of the Guide

Semester 8

4. Development of the Guide on protecting the biodiversity from IAS.
5. Dissemination & raising awareness regarding the content of the Guide

Semesters 9&10



6. Monitoring the results following the dissemination of the Guide

5. Costs (if relevant)

12.000 euro

6. Funding sources (if relevant):

The funds needed to cover the costs for this action will be gathered from the local authorities in the Bucharest-Ilfov Region, through the Regional Development Fund (based on the Law 315/2004).

Date:21.09.2021

Signature: _____

Stamp of the organization (if available): _____