



EPPO/CoE/IUCN ISSG/DGAV/UC/ESAC Workshop “How to communicate on pests and invasive alien plants” conclusions

The participants of the EPPO/CoE/IUCN-ISSG/DGAV/UC/ESAC Workshop are aware that pests, including invasive alien plants, are a major cause of damage to crops, health concerns and biodiversity loss. In order to contribute to the implementation of Aichi target 9 of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), they agreed on the following conclusions concerning communication on pests and invasive alien plants:

1. As biological invasions are intrinsically linked to human behaviour, communication is an essential component of policy and measures dealing with this issue;
2. It is essential to improve co-operation and to share information in between all sectors, in particular the plant health sector and environment sectors;
3. It is necessary to strengthen communication on the damage caused by pests - including invasive alien plants - particularly in urban areas, which are home to most of the European population, and which can facilitate the identification of potential strategic partners to work with (e.g. municipalities, botanic gardens, etc.) when developing information campaigns and other outreach activities;
4. There is a clear need to improve communication in the field of biological invasions and it is particularly important and urgent to explore all the facets of the issue and to develop a more interdisciplinary approach based on the involvement of social sciences (i.e. communication science, sociology, anthropology, etc.) in this field;
5. Effective communication requires: the definition of target audience, objectives, clear messages and the tools to be used, and evaluation of the outcomes; it is important to involve professional staff with adequate skills and to take into account existing experiences around the world;
6. When addressing mass media (both formal media and the many varied web-based instruments) messages should be adapted for non-specialist audiences, avoiding technical and complex language, and giving preference to ‘stories’ and other elements (visual and other) that make the message attractive;
7. Improving communication requires capacity building and training in the relevant disciplines and tools;
8. Communication efforts need to be carefully planned, form an integral part of programmes and projects aimed at preventing entry, containment or eradication of pests and invasive alien plants and receive long-term funding; results of communication and awareness efforts need to be carefully evaluated to assess their impact on public perceptions and behaviour;
9. An international, web-based platform to share experiences on communication on pests including invasive alien plants would be a much welcomed step in the efforts to improve methods and achieve a better public understanding on the impacts of pests including invasive alien plants on nature, crops, health and livelihoods; such a platform should be able to help publicising interesting experiences and allow research on public attitudes on the topic.