



Inva'Ziles — the News

Newsletter No. 3 July 2017

Five Years of the Inva'Ziles Project !

The Inva'Ziles Project began in 2012, to help tackle one of the major causes of biodiversity loss on the islands of the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), invasive species. Invasives also have huge impacts on local communities, the production sector and, increasingly, tourism. The lack of adequate management puts the biological diversity of our islands and the livelihoods of our people at risk.

The aim of the Inva'Ziles Project is to increase capacity to reduce the spread of invasive species and their impacts on the people and biodiversity of the WIO islands. The project was originally intended to finish in January 2017 but, after delays in 2015 owing to changes in personnel, the project was granted an extension (but no extra money!) until July 2018, to enable us to catch up and complete the activities.

Much has happened since the last newsletter was issued in 2014, and especially since the start of the project's second phase at the end of 2015. We now enjoy the strong involvement of partner organisations in the islands, and the Western Indian Ocean Network on Invasive Species (WIONIS) has been reinvigorated (page 2). Five field projects have been selected and started in Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles (p. 3-4), and a number of studies have been commissioned (p. 2) to increase the evidence of the impacts of invasives and create a stronger message to convince island leaders that more investment in action against them will be worthwhile. The project has recently organised or contributed to several regional workshops for sharing knowledge and experience, and to plan action. The project was highly visible at the World Conservation Congress (Hawai'i, September 2016) and the Island Invasives conference (Scotland, July 2017) (p.6), where we organised workshops to obtain input into a global island invasives planning guidance document, which the project is developing (p.5).

Dr Alan Tye alan.tye@iucn.org Inva'Ziles Project Coordinator



UPCOMING

Keep watching the WIONIS email list for news of:

- A new platform for the WIONIS web site
- Regional workshop on biosecurity and biocontrol at the University of La Réunion (September 2017)
- Progress on the Inva'Ziles pilot projects
- Results of studies
- and more...

Project planning, now and beyond Inva'Ziles – Steering Committee meetings in 2016 and 2017

At the Inva'Ziles Steering Committee meeting in **March 2016** in Mauritius (photo below left), the project staff presented our plans for the remainder of the project to the EU and island representatives, who agreed on a strategy for the remaining two years. The SC's island representatives reviewed progress when they next met in **April 2017** in Seychelles (below), and also discussed how to ensure the continuation of essential long-term activities such as regional coordination mechanisms (WIONIS) and further external support beyond the current project.

Will there be an Inva'Ziles 2... ?
Watch this space !



The Inva'Ziles Project (official title *Preparation and testing of a comprehensive model for preventing and managing the spread of invasive species on island ecosystems*) is implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), funded by the European Union and hosted by the Indian Ocean Commission.

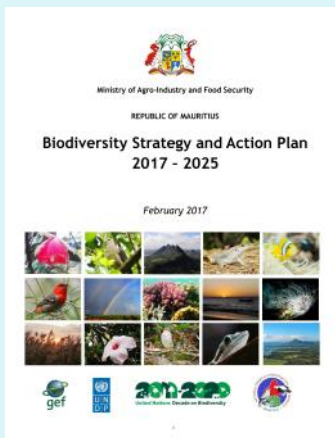


Inva'Ziles – Generating information to raise support for the battle

A gap analysis of national and island plans for managing invasive species in the Western Indian Ocean region

A gap analysis of the plans for invasive species management in the Western Indian Ocean countries and islands, including National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), National Invasive Species Strategies and Action Plans (NISSAPs) and others, has been commissioned from Dr Souad Boudjelas, an expert in national invasives planning who has previously carried out a similar analysis for the island countries and territories of the Pacific. The analysis will identify areas that require strengthening, and produce recommendations for the improvement of invasives plans, particularly regarding their comprehensiveness, priorities, and ability to address the invasive species challenges in our islands. The study results are expected later this year.

National policies, plans and action



Throughout 2016, Mauritius held a number of workshops and reviews for its new NBSAP, to which IUCN was invited to contribute through the Inva'Ziles Coordinator. The final draft of the new NBSAP, submitted for government approval early in 2017, includes a section on invasives which focuses on revising the National Invasive Species Strategy and incorporating within it a costed, time-specific Action Plan. We are very grateful to the Mauritius authorities for their confidence in allowing us to assist with this process.

Making connections, sharing knowledge

Western Indian Ocean Network on Invasive Species (WIONIS)

WIONIS, created in 2012, is intended to be a permanent network for people interested in or working on invasive species in the WIO region. Up to 2015, its email distribution list had around 60 subscribers, but at the re-launch of the service in January 2016 this was increased to about 310. The tally is now over 330, with members in all the WIO countries and territories as well as the neighbouring Socotra, Australia, Kenya and South Africa, plus 14 other countries outside the Indian Ocean region. Since the re-launch, the email list has become more active, averaging about a dozen messages distributed per month.



But still the list is under-used. Few members contribute, though plenty tell us they are reading. Please use the list to send your requests for assistance and advice, to post ads for jobs and volunteers, or simply to distribute news of your projects and their successes and difficulties. WIONIS is a mutual help network and needs your participation to increase its usefulness. Persuade your invasives colleagues and friends to join!

To subscribe to the WIONIS email list, contact the Coordinator:
Alan.Tye@iucn.org

How much do invasives cost our island communities, and how much does it cost to manage them?

A cost-benefit evaluation of invasive species in the WIO

Invasive species are a huge problem for the WIO islands, and their management is under-resourced. How can we increase understanding and support for tackling them? One way is to produce strong economic arguments, which carry weight with politicians (and voters!). Inva'Ziles is financing a study to estimate the costs of selected invasive species associated with our pilot projects in the Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles (next page). The study will examine the costs of invasives to local communities and to important income-generating activities, and will also estimate the costs of effectively managing them. This should help to show that managing invasives is worth the investment, and provide a basis for targeted lobbying.

The call for proposals for this study went out in May 2017, the study team should be selected in August, and results are due early in 2018.

WIO info in
global
invasives
databases

GRIIS
GLOBAL REGISTER OF
INTRODUCED AND INVASIVE SPECIES

With the help of our country partners, Shyama Pagad of the IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group has been updating and incorporating invasive species information from the WIO region into the online global databases maintained by IUCN. One of these is GRIIS, which provides freely downloadable lists of the introduced and invasive species found in countries and islands worldwide. In addition, more detailed information on selected invasive species can be found in IUCN's Global Invasive Species Database (GISD).

Consult these databases at:
www.griis.org
www.iucngisd.org

More info:
s.pagad@auckland.ac.nz

Rodrigues Island, Mauritius : Strengthening invasive plant management and native forest restoration

The Rodrigues Environment Commission's Forestry Services (Inva'Ziles partner in Rodrigues) has been running a successful programme to control invasive woody plants, especially *Pikan Loulou Acacia nilotica*, combined with replanting seedlings of highly threatened endemic and other indigenous plants. The aim is to regenerate native forest on invaded and degraded areas. The programme operates in state-managed protected areas and also in community-held lands, where much of the work is contracted out to community groups, who benefit from improved grazing management. Inva'Ziles is helping to expand the programme, start a monitoring scheme and refine the methods. This should produce information that can be used to publicise the project, obtain further funding, and spread the word about Rodrigues' remarkable conservation successes.



A hillside in Rodrigues, heavily invaded by Pikan Loulou *Acacia nilotica*.

Indigenous and endemic seedlings doing well, shaded by a light canopy of *Acacia nilotica* trees that have been killed by ring-barking.



Innovative projects demonstrate what can be done!

Inva'Ziles is assisting Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles with pilot demonstration projects **for managing invasive species.**

Mahé Island, Seychelles : Attempted eradication of the invasive spiny scrambler "Rons" *Acacia concinna*

This project will attempt to eliminate Rons from all the locations where it occurs on Mahé. This would in fact eradicate the species completely from the Seychelles, because it has been found only on Mahé island – so far. Our partner the [Seychelles Plant Conservation Action Group](#) is leading this first attempt to eradicate an invasive plant from an inhabited island in the Seychelles.



Palm forest in the Vallée de Mai, heavily invaded by introduced plants.

Praslin Island, Seychelles :

Integrated invasives management in a World Heritage site

Praslin is home to the renowned Coco de Mer forest in the Vallée de Mai, a World Heritage site under pressure from a suite of invasive species, including rats, ants, tenrec and many plants. Tourism income from this site not only finances its conservation, but also pays for Aldabra Island, Seychelles' other WH site, so damage to this conservation resource would have serious consequences beyond Praslin. Inva'Ziles is assisting our partner the Seychelles Islands Foundation to begin a programme of integrated invasives management, addressing all of these problematic species at once, while monitoring the results and the hoped-for positive effects on the native forest and its endemic species. Seychelles is a regional leader in invasives management and this holistic approach is another example of its pioneering attitude.

Mauritius Island, Mauritius :

Invasive plant control and forest restoration in the Black River Gorges National Park

The Inva'Ziles Project has to find €400,000 in counterpart funding, and all of our pilot project partners mentioned on these pages are contributing to this. The Mauritius National Parks and Conservation Service has recently shown great generosity in offering to explore the possibilities for funding a pilot project fully from other sources, while Inva'Ziles funds will be used to incorporate this project into our invasives cost-benefit analysis described on p. 2. The pilot project that has been proposed is part of Mauritius's intensive Conservation Managed Areas programme, which controls invasive woody plants (especially Strawberry Guava *Psidium cattleianum*) and restores native forest, in this case at Plaine Raoul in the Black River Gorges NP.



The tree canopy in the Conservation Managed Areas of Mauritius is made up mostly of native species.

Anjouan, Grande Comore and Mohéli Islands, Comoros :

Generating data and creating national mechanisms for managing invasive species

There has been very little management of invasives in the Comoros, and we don't even have a comprehensive list of invasive species to work with. At a joint workshop in January 2017, several state and non-governmental organisations agreed to join forces to address this. The National Centre for Documentation and Scientific Research (CNDRS, Inva'Ziles lead partner), the National Institute for Research in Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment (INRAPE), the University of Comoros and National Herbarium, Mohéli National Park, NGO Dahari and others have begun a programme of data compilation and field surveys across the three islands. These should produce the information needed to plan an invasives management programme for Comoros. At the same time, this so-far informal grouping of institutions will work towards incorporation as a National Invasive Species Committee, which will then write the first NIS-SAP for the country.



Photo : Christophe Lavergne

Comoros workshop Jan 2017, where participants informally constituted their national invasive species committee.



Guidelines for Invasive Species Planning and Management on Islands

Since January 2016, the Inva'Ziles Project has assembled an international team of more than 70 island experts and invasives practitioners from all ocean regions, to help develop a guidance document for anyone planning an island invasive species programme. The consultative process for writing the document began with a questionnaire to WIONIS members, to ask what kind of invasives guidance the region feels it needs, followed by a similar questionnaire which was sent over worldwide email lists to reach islands throughout the world. There was an obvious consensus that guidance on planning was needed, and the decision was taken to produce globally relevant “*Guidelines for Invasive Species Planning and Management on Islands*”. This document is now being compiled in consultation with invasives battlers from island countries and territories around the world, to support them and their colleagues in developing their invasives plans and management programmes. The document will also guide regional and international agencies in providing assistance to island countries.

The *Guidelines* working group continues to increase in numbers as more people offer to help.

If you would like to contribute or see the latest draft, contact the Coordinator: Alan.Tye@iucn.org

Commit to the Honolulu Challenge

During the 2016 World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i (see p. 6), there was a call from the IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group, the host community in Hawai'i, and experts, protected area managers, representatives of governments and intergovernmental bodies, NGOs and others, for greater action on invasive species. This resulted in the Honolulu Challenge.

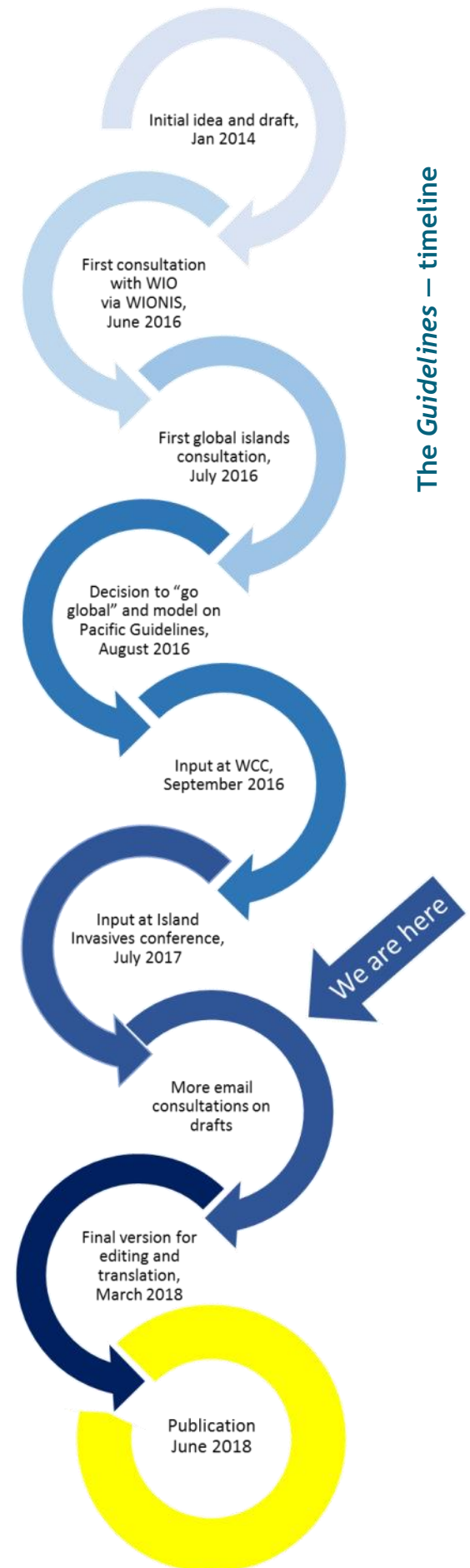


Can your organization make a commitment?

To find out how, see:

www.iucn.org/theme/species/our-work/invasive-species/honolulu-challenge-invasive-alien-species

The Guidelines – timeline



Inva'Ziles – Publicising our work

World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i

In September 2016, project staff Alan Tye, Olivier Hasinger and Kevin Smith organised and participated in several events at the World Conservation Congress (WCC) aimed at furthering Inva'Ziles objectives, especially the global guidance document. This document was the subject of two separate working sessions, where participants contributed excellent material to improve the first draft.

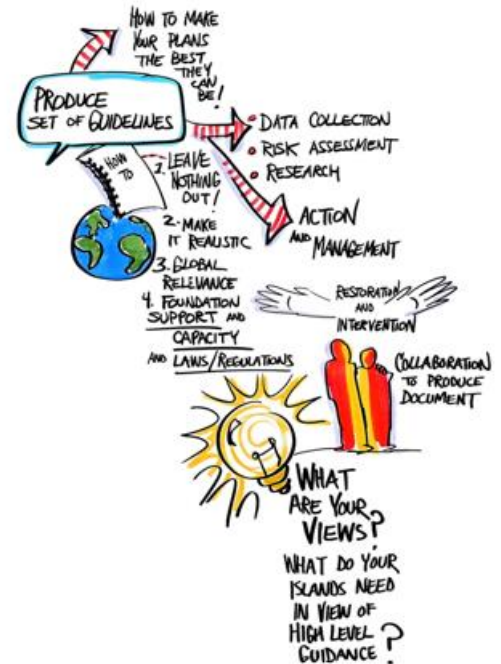


Right: the Congress artist's impression of part of the Inva'Ziles main event calling for contributions to the global guidance document, when participants provided input on the spot, and volunteered future contributions.



Alan also gave a presentation on the pilot projects, facilitated by Olivier.

Photo : Olivier Hasinger



Artwork: Leah Silverman

Useful publicity in the Seychelles

In April 2017, while in Seychelles for the project Steering Committee meeting, the Inva'Ziles Project Coordinator was invited onto the national TV programme *20 minit* ("20 minutes") to talk about the problems of invasive species, why and how we should manage them, and how the Inva'Ziles Project is helping to do so. This led to a discussion of the project's activities in Seychelles, particularly the pilot project for the possible eradication of *Rons Acacia concinna* (see p. 3).

Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation also interviewed Inva'Ziles Steering Committee members for the national TV news, and gave Lindsay Chong-Seng (right), Chair of the Plant Conservation Action Group (our partner on the Rons pilot project), the opportunity to ask members of the public to report infestations of this plant.



Island Invasives conference, Dundee, Scotland, July 2017

Inva'Ziles Coordinator Alan Tye and IUCN Invasive Species Programme Officer Kevin Smith attended this conference and organised a working session on the guidance document, similar to that held at the WCC. The conference was the 3rd in a series dedicated to invasive species management on islands, and was attended by nearly 300 people, including many of the world's top island invasives specialists and many friends from the WIO islands. Our workshop attracted about 50 people, most of whom had not yet been involved in the process of writing the guidance document, and who provided significant new perspectives and input.

More in the next Inva'Ziles News !



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Thanks to everyone else who has helped with this project and newsletter!