



Interlink

Feedback from African or NIS partners

We moved ahead considerably on our research subject thanks to the involvement of all countries!

You have been part of an INCO project in the scope of the last European Framework Program, FP6. What was the project about? Which countries or regions were part of the project?

Based on a better understanding of terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity and ecosystem functioning, ALARM develops and tests methods and protocols for the assessment of large-scale environmental risks in order to minimize negative direct and indirect human impacts. In particular, risks arising from climate change, environmental chemicals, biological invasions and pollinator loss in the context of current and future European land use patterns are assessed. ALARM unites 80 partners from 36 countries of Europe, China, South Africa, Southern and Central America.

How did you connect with the EU consortium? What was your role in the project? How easy was your integration in the project?

The research group of the Institute of Zoology of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus headed by Dr. Vitaly Semenchenko started investigation of the biological invasions in 2005 in the frame of the national program "Ecological safety" supported by the Ministry of Environment of Belarus. IZ-NASB was invited to join ALARM consortium after the report at the II International conference on biological invasions in Barok, Yaroslavl' region, Russia and finally became its partner as a result of the FP6-2006-TTC-TU Call. IZ-NASB enlarged the research potential of the ALARM "water" group on invasive species and contributed to the assessment of the environmental risks of the biological invasions. When Belarusian group entered the project in 2007 the theoretical base of invasions within the ALARM had been developed already and the group was entrusted with verifying the theory. There were no problems with integration of IZ-NASB in the consortium. The previous experience of INCO helped the team to get used to the administrative procedures rather quickly.

What were the main benefits/drawbacks of such cooperation for your project?

There are several main benefits of cooperation within ALARM:

- ✓ The problem of invasive species influence on local flora and fauna is of great importance for Belarus which is a transit country. At the moment there are over 30



invasive species of animals in Belarus from Northern and Central America, New Zealand and China. This number grows rapidly. Though the research in this area is funded on the national level it could take many years to reach alone the results we received within ALARM.

- ✓ When the Belarusian group entered the project in 2007 the theoretical base of invasions within the ALARM had been developed already and the group was entrusted with verifying the theory. It was the Belarusian team which gave 60% of the data needed to solve this problem. The data received made the base for 2 publications.
- ✓ Networking and fruitful contacts were made with ALARM partners, especially within the “water” group on invasive species.

I can see no drawbacks in IZ-NASB participation in ALARM!

Would you consider working on a European INCO project again? On which topic?

The group expresses a great interest in further participation in FP7. Unfortunately, in comparison with FP6 the issues of biodiversity are less covered. In spring 2008 IZ-NASB together with ALARM partners from the Baltic region headed by Sweden prepare the application to HelCom.