

Building knowledge for invasive species policy and management: the need for collaborative learning between actors

Vanderhoeven Sonia¹ and Etienne Branquart²

¹ Belgian Biodiversity Platform

E-mail: s.vanderhoeven@biodiversity.be

² Cellule interdépartementale sur les Espèces Invasives – Service Public de Wallonie

E-mail: etienne.branquart@spw.wallonie.be

Like many disciplines related to biodiversity conservation, invasion biology is expected to produce knowledge that gives answers to environmental questions raised by decision makers and nature managers. However, for the time being, the potential of research is not effectively enough realized through policy or practice (Matzek *et al.*, 2013). This is due to a mixture of factors, from social foundation to enabling processes or information base issues that impede the effectiveness of knowledge to be concretely implemented in actions.

Filling this knowing–doing gap does not only require to increase the amount of information produced by the scientific community, but to reshape the way the knowledge is created, exchanged, experienced and used in practice. This is a great challenge that should engage end–users in the knowledge creation process.

Communities of practice involve a variety of actors concerned by the issue: scientists from natural to social sciences, policy makers, practitioners, NGO's, the private sector, etc. They are interdisciplinary and may be used to facilitate interfacing between science, policy and management.

Complementarily to such networking processes, the development of information systems is crucial for ensuring accessibility to scientifically reliable information (Katsanevakis *et al.*, 2013) (such as occurrence data, reports, scientific articles, etc.), expert registries, but also some kind of knowledge resulting from the digestion of scientific information. The latter is indeed not always understandable or ready to use for policy makers and practitioners and must be translated, simplified or set in another perspective through risk analysis report, black–watch–alert lists, etc.

Working in this way should help to increase scientific credibility and build strong and effective partnership between the different actors willing to act concretely against invasive alien species

References

Katsanevakis S. et al. 2013 Implementing the European policies for alien species – networking, science, and partnership in a complex environment. *Management of Biological Invasions* 4 (1): 3–6.

Matzek V. et al. 2013. Closing the knowing–doing gap in invasive plant management : accessibility and interdisciplinarity of scientific research. *Conservation Letters* 0: 1–8.