



RELION
MED *Life*

RELIONMED: Preventing a LIONfish invasion in the MEDiterranean through early response and targeted Removal

Periklis Kleitou

Marine and Environmental Research (MER) Lab
University of Plymouth



«Preventing a lionfish invasion in the
Mediterranean through early response and
targeted removal (LIFE16 NAT/CY/000832). With the
contribution of the LIFE financial instrument of the
European Union / www.ec.europa.eu/life»

LIFE Multiannual Work Programme 2014-2017 – IAS species were given priority

Projects implementing actions targeting **Invasive Alien Species** (under Target 5 of the Biodiversity Strategy or in view of contributing to reaching the level of protection set out in descriptor 2 - Non-indigenous species of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive) through actions testing and applying approaches aimed at:

- **Preventing**
- **Establishing an early warning and rapid response system**
- **Eradicating or controlling established invasive alien species**

The three steps should be addressed in a comprehensive framework.

They should be set up to improve existing – or introduce new – **technical, administrative or legal frameworks** on the relevant level; they should aim at preventing the broader establishment of IAS within the EU.

Good Timing*

Regulation (EU) 1143/2014 on invasive alien species (the IAS Regulation)

- Entered into force on **1 January 2015**, fulfilling Action 16 of Target 5 of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy.
- Provides for a set of measures for **EU priority species'** prevention, early detection and rapid eradication, and management (in line with the LIFE Multiannual Work Programme topic)

But, there is uncertainty on the efficiency of management measures for marine species and most countries have limited capacity to act due to lack of finance, expertise, appropriate funding mechanisms, and (Shine *et al.* 2009; Caffrey *et al.* 2014)

Project in a nutshell

Highlighting the demonstrative character



Use the lesson's learned in the western Atlantic, to develop capacity and mechanisms and tackle the lionfish invasion at its heart

Conservation Actions of the Project

- Create a **surveillance** and early detection system;
- Develop **RATs** (Removal Action Teams) and demonstrate coordinated and opportunistic **removals** of lionfish around Cyprus, guided by the surveillance system;
- Focus on **priority habitats** (including Natura 2000, MPAs);
- Explore potential small local **market** niches that would make future removals economically sustainable;
- Develop **tools** for managers (model/guides) so that the built capacity can be **transferred** and replicated in other countries of the Mediterranean.



RELIONMED overview

Duration: 01/09/2017 - 01/09/2021 (4 years)

- **Total budget:** 1,676,077 Euro
- **EU contribution:** 1,000,849 Euro

Consortium:

2 Universities (University of Plymouth, University of Cyprus)

1 SME (Marine & Environmental Research (MER) Lab Ltd)

1 NGO (Enalia Pysis Environmental Research Center)

1 Governmental Body (DFMR)



ENALIA PHYSIS
ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH CENTRE



**PIONEER
WITH
PLYMOUTH
UNIVERSITY
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- **Three** preparatory (A)
- **Four** Conservation actions (C)
- **Three** monitoring of the project actions' impact (D)
- **Four** public awareness and dissemination of results (E)
- Project management (F)



Emphasis was given



- **Sustainability and replicability**

Continuation of surveillance, removal response system, monitoring, etc.,

Market assessment / sustainable exploitation

- **EU-added value and transnational importance**

Risk Assessment/analysis, EU Regulation

Synergies and cooperation with other (LIFE) projects and EU initiatives (avoid double-funding)

- **Dissemination and transferability**

Letter of supports from the competent authorities and relevant stakeholders (from CY and abroad)

All dissemination, training and educational material will be freely available on RELIONMED's portal

- **Quantifiable environmental impact/conservation benefits (expected results), and LIFE actions**

e.g. 400 lionfish removed, 50 female fish were going to produce 2 million eggs in that year each, which would have had 0.3% survival rate, then around 300,000 less lionfish will survive the next year. If we assume an average lionfish weight of 150 g, on a diet 5 % of body weight / day, then more than 1 tonne biomass of many fish and crustacean species will be saved to support local food chains.



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Evaluation Scores

RELIONMED – A winning proposal



1. Technical coherence and quality
2. Financial coherence and quality
3. EU added value: extent and quality of the contribution to the specific objectives of the priority areas of the two LIFE sub-programme
4. Contribution to the project topics
5. EU added value: multipurpose, synergies, and integration
6. EU added value: replicability and transferability
7. EU added value: transnational, green procurement, uptake

Award Criteria	Score
AW1	17/20
AW2	15/20
AW3	18/20
AW4	10/10
AW5	14/15
AW6	9/10
AW7	2/5
Final Score	73/85
Overall Score	85/100



AWARD CRITERION 1 - Technical coherence and quality

Evaluation score **17 out of 20**



- ✓ The expected results are **sufficiently described and quantified**;
- ✓ The **logic of the project is clear**, it addresses the mentioned threats by setting up an early surveillance system
- ✓ The relevant **constraints/risks** such as lack of stakeholder engagement, getting permits, etc. have been **identified**
- ✓ The actions are **sufficiently described and quantified**
- ✓ Socioeconomic and ecological **monitoring were included**
- ✓ **Partnership seems to be competent and appropriate, with clear flow and structure**
- ✓ Project **planning appears realistic and adequate** to maintain results and to spread information
- × **No milestones** for main Conservation Actions
- × **Overlapping** with available GIS portals
- × **Indicators** for dissemination activities **were not quantified**



AWARD CRITERION 2 - Financial coherence and quality

Evaluation score **15 out of 20**



- ✓ The project **value for money** is judged to be high
- ✓ The **budget is justified**, the project seems to be cost-efficient. Costs are mostly adequate to carry out the actions by the means proposed.
- ✓ All beneficiaries contribute to the project budget. **Other funding sources have been analyzed** (ERDF, ESF, CF, FP7, CIP, EFF, ENRTP, IUCN), and it was concluded that none of them are suitable to fund a project with such conservation objectives.
- ✓ Equipment (smaller than 1%), and consumables (smaller than 1%) **costs are reasonable and correctly attributed**.
- × **Dissemination action E.1 include a high number of Senior expert days** – this is not considered appropriate for the tasks involved
- × **The role description** is not reported for all the foreseen categories (e.g. researchers are involved in different tasks without specification), hence it is difficult to assess whether the type of staff is appropriate
- × **A relatively high amount of EU travel**



AWARD CRITERION 3 - EU added value: extent and quality of the contribution to the specific objectives of the priority areas of the two LIFE sub-programmes

Evaluation Score **18 out of 20**



- ✓ **The project complies with Art. 11 of the LIFE regulation, and the thematic priorities for Nature and Biodiversity**
- ✓ **The proposal will set an early detection system for the control of the IAS lionfish, and create a procedure (through the training of divers and fishermen) to control and where possible eradicate the population recently established.**
- ✓ **The project is addressing an urgent threat**
- ✓ **Cyprus is in a strategic position for the development of surveillance/early warning system.**
- ✓ **Risk assessment and a risk analysis are necessary to assess elements of articles 4(3) and 4(6) of the IAS Regulation which should be met for inclusion of an IAS in the Union List, in order to update Implementing Regulation 2016/1141.**
- ✓ The impacts foreseen by the project activities are ambitious and clear
- ✓ The conservation benefit of the project can be defined as high.



AWARD CRITERION 4 - Contribution to the project topics

Evaluation Score **10 out of 10**



- ✓ **The project fully complies with topic 1, namely Projects implementing actions targeting Invasive Alien Species** (under Target 5 of the Biodiversity Strategy or in view of contributing to reaching the level of protection set out in descriptor 2 - Non- indigenous species of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive) through actions testing and applying approaches aimed at: 1. preventing the introduction of invasive alien species, in particular by tackling pathways of unintentional introduction; 2. establishing an early warning and rapid response system; and 3. eradicating or controlling established invasive alien species on an appropriate spatial scale.
- ✓ **The project fully develops the three required steps of the topic**



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AWARD CRITERION 5 - EU added value: multipurpose, synergies, and integration

Evaluation Score **14 out of 15**



- ✓ The project **intends to strengthen regional cooperation**, responsibility and surveillance on corporate and social levels and indicates **that it will turn lionfish from a threatening and dangerous species to an inspiration for arts and applications**, material for research, education, information and awareness, and an example on how communities can work together to protect and improve the ecosystem.
- ✓ **Synergies will be established** with other projects to promote the scope of co-operation where it is possible, while networks and meetings will be established with international or EU wide organisation/platforms that can have significant decision making or influencing capabilities and have an active invested interest in the subject of marine invasions.
- ✓ The proposal creates **synergies between other policy areas and Union policies** (restaurant and the jewellery sector)



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AWARD CRITERION 6 - EU added value: replicability and transferability

Evaluation Score **9 out of 10**



- ✓ **A project communication strategy will be defined from the beginning of the project** in order to achieve an effective dissemination of the project actions and results.
- ✓ **Dissemination, training and educational material will be created and become freely available** to encourage and guide interested stakeholders on how to take action
- ✓ **The development and operation of a surveillance and early detection system for the whole Mediterranean will enable its use in other areas not included in the project.**
- ✓ **Stakeholders from abroad will be trained and provided with the necessary capacity to replicate in their countries the best-practices for lionfish management.**
- ✓ **All project results** will be evaluated and included in an **Integrated Management Guide** which will ensure that practices and actions tested in the current project can be easily transferred and replicated.



AWARD CRITERION 7 - EU added value: transnational, green procurement, uptake

Evaluation score **2 out of 5**



- ✓ **The proposal foresees a partnership between Cyprus and United Kingdom** (University of Plymouth is involved as knowledge partner), but main actions will take place in **only one country** (Cyprus) to target a Mediterranean problem
- ✓ **RELIONMED aims to create multi-national network and engage with key stakeholders of neighbouring countries** that share a mutual concern about the lionfish invasion to transfer tools and lessons learned in the lionfish management in Cyprus.
- ✓ The project will **adopt EU Green Procurement Policy (GPP)**
- × A direct link to the GPP toolkit is not mentioned
- × The project does not foresee to take up any results of any of the EU Research and Innovation Programmes





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Thank you for your attention!



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