



An tSeirbhís Páirceanna Náisiúnta  
agus Fiadhúlra  
National Parks and Wildlife Service



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage

# Ireland's Invasive Alien Species Soil and Stone Pathway Action Plan 2023 – 2027

## Public Consultation

## Background Document

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage are inviting any interested parties to provide comments and make submissions on 'Ireland's Invasive Alien Species Soil and Stone Pathway Action Plan 2023 – 2027'. This document presents a background to the Pathway Action plan to assist with your submission.

### What are Invasive Alien Species?

- Invasive Alien Species are species that are alien (non-native) to Ireland and are only here due to human intervention – either intentional or unintentional. They can negatively impact wildlife, nature, the economy, and the way we live.
- With increased movement of people and goods around the world, there is an increased introduction of invasive alien species. Therefore, actions to help reduce the risk of further introductions are required. Key to this is knowing how the invasive alien species are likely to be introduced and acting to prevent further introductions and spread through those pathways.
- Pathways are the routes and mechanisms of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species.

### What are Pathway Action Plans?

- Pathway Action Plans promote the development of coordinated efforts to prevent or minimize the risk posed by the pathway using measures such as raising public awareness and setting out actions to prevent unintentional introductions by: minimizing the contamination of goods, commodities, vehicles, and equipment by invasive alien species, and ensuring appropriate border checks.
- The Pathway Action Plan identifies key stakeholders and determine what actions can be taken by whom to reduce the risk of further introduction and spread.

## Why is there a need for a Soil and Stone Pathway Action Plan?

- Movement of soil and stone - including excavated/dredged spoil, from areas where there are invasive species, has caused their introduction to new sites and spread within sites.
- Plants, animals or pathogens can be unintentionally transported to new sites in habitat material such as soil and stone. For example, in soil that is excavated from a development site and transported for reuse at another site. The excavated material may contain whole or viable parts (seeds, rhizomes, plant fragments, eggs) of invasive alien species that could establish at the new site. Additionally, excavation activities in an area where invasive alien species are present could inadvertently result in the attachment of contaminated soil to excavation and transport machinery. If the machinery has not been properly checked and cleaned before being used in other locations, the invasive alien species may survive transport on the equipment and be introduced into another location.
- Excavation and transport equipment include any machinery or equipment that has been used for substrate extraction and transport that may retain even small amounts of substrate that could harbour invasive alien species. This equipment could include auger drill rigs, earth-moving vehicles such as bucket loaders, bulldozers, and scrapers, agricultural machinery, as well as vehicles and trailers used for the transportation of soil and stone. This includes all parts of equipment that is in contact with substrate, such as digging apparatus, tyres, tracks and undercarriage.
- The development of action plans to tackle priority pathways of unintentional introduction and spread of Invasive Alien Species of Union concern in Ireland is a requirement under the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation<sup>1</sup>. This Pathway Action Plan targeting the transport of invasive alien species in soil and stone material is one of a series of plans intended to reduce the risk of introduction and spread of invasive alien species in Ireland.
- In general, pathway action plans promote good awareness of the risks your activity may have in spreading invasive species and promotes that implementation of biosecurity<sup>2</sup> measures by all relevant stakeholders are needed.
- In the absence of implementing appropriate biosecurity measures, there is an increased potential for the inadvertent spread of viable invasive alien species from infested to un-infested sites. Accordingly, sensible steps should be taken to minimise, if not eliminate opportunities for further invasive alien species spread. This will also reduce the risk of committing an offence by introducing/spreading invasive alien species.

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<sup>1</sup> The official title of the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation is: Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'biosecurity' relates to measures taken to prevent the introduction and spread of living organisms.

## **What is in the Soil and Stone Pathway Action Plan?**

- Ireland's Invasive Alien Species Soil and Stone Pathway Action Plan 2023 – 2027 outlines the general policy approach to tackling this pathway and what actions government and those involved with excavation, transportation, recovery, reuse and disposal of habitat material in Ireland can undertake. The Plan includes: a description of the target pathway, provides an outline of the policy and legal context, sets the aim and objectives for the plan, sets the key actions and identifies key stakeholders. Information on the management of the plan and appendices listing the Working Group members, the priority species covered by the plan and some information on biosecurity resources.

## **How was this Pathway Action Plan drafted?**

- The Pathway Action Plan is drafted by a Working Group with representatives from industry, public bodies and central government. Members of the Working Group are listed on page 16 of the draft plan.
- The Working Group is chaired by the National Parks and Wildlife Service with administrative support on drafting of the Pathway Action Plan provided by the National Biodiversity Data Centre.
- Core to the Pathway Action Plan is the setting of key actions that will provide effective measures to reduce the risk of introduction and spread of invasive alien species where there is movement of soil and stone. Key actions have been drafted addressing Best Practice, Policy, Raising Awareness, Reporting and Knowledge Gaps.

## **More information**

For more information on invasive alien species, biosecurity and pathway action plans, visit:

<https://invasives.ie>