



BARENTS

Invasive Alien Species

Barents IAS Project Report

Insights, Lessons Learned & Best Practises

Rural Women's Advisory
Organization



MAA- JA
KOTITALOUSNAISET

Barents Invasive Alien Species (IAS)

- Project area: Barents region of Finland, Sweden and Norway
- Duration: 6/2022-12/2024
- Funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland
- Funding: 900 000 €
- Ministry responsible: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
- Coordinating party:
Natural Resources Institute Finland



Aims and goals

- Activation of the inhabitants and other stakeholders for the management of invasive alien species
- Developing fishing methods for pink salmon and researching it as an IAS
- Establishment of an IAS cooperation network

Partners



Rural Women's Advisory Organization's role

- Project schedule: 5/2023-12/2024
- Focus on management of invasive alien plant species:
 - ✓ garden lupin (*Lupinus polyphyllus*)
 - ✓ nootka lupin (*Lupinus nootkatensis*)
 - ✓ alien hogweeds: Sosnowsky's hogweed, Persian hogweed, and giant hogweed (*Heracleum persicum* group)
 - ✓ Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*)

Aim

- Activation of municipalities and other local stakeholders of the Barents region for the management of invasive alien plant species
- Support establishment of an IAS cooperation network

Working in collaboration with



What & Why

Activating municipalities and local stakeholders

Successful management of invasive alien species (IAS) requires collaboration between authorities, municipalities and other local stakeholders. It is also a well-known fact that IAS do not respect national borders, thereby close cooperation between neighbouring countries is a prerequisite for successful IAS management.

In the Barents IAS Project, we utilized different ways to encourage Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian municipalities and local stakeholders such as NGOs, companies, farmers, to take an active role in IAS management.

Specific events/actions:

- An international webinar
- An international seminar in Finland
- Study/networking trips to Norway and Sweden
- Impi's Day challenge
- Info sessions etc.

Materials produced:

- To share inspiring stories: "IAS heroes" blog posts series
- To motivate for action: a series of short videos
- To share best practices: How to arrange Finnish "talkoot" [factsheet]
- To share information: IAS management in the Barents region [report]



International IAS webinar

- The webinar focused on telling why and how to prevent the impacts of invasive alien plant species in the Barents region of Finland, Sweden and Norway.
- Target group was especially municipalities and NGOs in the Barents region. However, information and the practical hints and tips given at the webinar were meant to be suitable also for municipalities and organizations outside the Barents region.
- Participants were recruited via social media (FB, LinkedIn), sending personal invitations by email, advertising the event in Barents IAS newsletter, and in the newsletter that Association of Finnish Cities and Municipalities (Kuntaliitto) sent to all Finnish cities and municipalities.
- There was 83 participants. Most of the participants were from Finnish municipalities but also some IAS professionals from Finland, Sweden and Norway participated.
- The webinar succeeded well and there was a lively discussion and networking during the webinar.

Lessons learned:

- Collaboration with Kuntaliitto was important: we gained many participants with their assistance.
- Targeting and “serving” IAS professionals, representatives of municipalities and NGOs is challenging with one common webinar.
- Activating municipalities in northern parts of Finland is challenging.
- A separate webinar targeted to NGOs in each country (in native language) could work better.

Webinar BEAUTY – BUT A BEAST: practical tools for municipalities and NGOs to prevent the impacts of invasive alien plants

Where: Teams meeting

Date: Tuesday November 28th, 2023

Time: EEC/Finnish time 9:30-11:40

Programme:

9:30 Welcoming words

9:35 Miia Jauni, Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke): Invasive alien plant species: ecologic, economic, and social threat in the Barents region

10:00 Best practises / interesting experiments from Sweden, Norway and Finland

- Chatarina Karlsson, Länsstyrelsen Västerbotten: Sheep grazing – effective eradication method for Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*)
- Bo Eide, Tromsø Municipality: Winning battles but not the war against “Tromsø palm” (Persian Hogweed, *Heracleum persicum*)
- Marjaana Hassani, Rural Women's Advisory Organization: How to handle IAS plant waste & its potential for bioenergy production
- Marika Turpeinen, Rural Women's Advisory Organization: Finnish-Swedish collaboration: learnings from the INSPECT project

11:00 Coffee break

11:05 Ursula Karjalainen, Pidä Lappi Siistinä ry: Tackling IAS problem with collaboration: practical hints and tips for municipalities and NGOs

11:20-11:40

At your service: Barents Invasive Alien Species Project

Q&A

Ending words

Barents IAS Forum international seminar



- On 26-27 June 2024, Rural Women's Advisory Organization together with Natural Resources Institute of Finland (Luke) arranged IAS seminar in Rovaniemi, Finland.
- There were 33 participants from Finland, Sweden and Norway representing state administrations, municipalities, road administrations, research institutes, the third sector, and the business world.
- The idea was that in addition to having interesting presentations from Finland, Sweden and Norway, we would give the participants an opportunity to learn about various control methods and take part in traditional Finnish communal volunteer work 'talkoot'.
- Wednesday June 26th was spent listening to seminar presentations at Science Centre Pilke, in addition the participants worked to solve IAS issues in workshops. At dinner, participants continued getting to know each other and sharing stories of IAS work.
- Thursday June 27th was spent with various work demonstrations as well as volunteer work.
 - ✓ Kalle Hellström from the Rural Women's Advisory Organization demonstrated the use of EcoKoivu pyrolysis liquid on hogweeds.
 - ✓ Stian Forland introduced a solution from the Norwegian company SoilSteam to clean the seed bank of invasive alien plant species from the soil.
 - ✓ Kimmo Kärki from Eco Weedkiller showed how hot water treatment destroys the Himalayan balsam foliage.
 - ✓ Participants became familiar with butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*) found in Rovaniemi's urban landscape. They discussed when a plant should be considered invasive and whether IAS have important functions, such as the butterbur in Rovaniemi which prevents erosion along the riverbank.
 - ✓ Susanna Koivujärvi from the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency talked about utilizing artificial intelligence in controlling invasive alien plant species along railways and roads.
 - ✓ Participants visited botanical gardens of the Arktikum Science Centre. The garden contains a few seedlings of the Nootka lupine (*Lupinus nootkatensis*), and the attendees went over how garden lupines (*Lupinus polyphyllus*) and Nootka lupines can be differentiated.
 - ✓ The field day and the seminar as a whole was wrapped up with 'talkoot' under the guidance of Ursula Karjalainen from the Keep Lapland Tidy association.

Successful IAS seminar



- Participants were recruited via social media (FB, LinkedIn), sending personal invitations by email, advertising the event in Barents IAS newsletter.
- The seminar had to be timed so that it would be possible to eradicate invasive alien plants and invited participants would not be on their summer holidays. Despite challenging timetable, we received a nice number of participants (33).
- Suitable group size and the schedule of the seminar (first day presentations and workshop/second day a field day) allowed people to get to know each other and to share knowledge and experiences. Having presentations with case stories from all the three countries was an excellent way to share knowledge and best practises.
- We received very good feedback from the seminar. →
- The seminar/IAS management received also [publicity in local media](#)
- Hint: We had “Barents IAS” gardening gloves as give aways/to be used at the field day, which turned out to be a nice solution.

😊 Possibility to share knowledge and experiences from successful measures in different places.

😊 Mycket bra organiserat, mycket folk att träffa och prata med, kunskap om andra länders arbete med IAS, möjlighet att få se och höra om bekämpningsmetoder.

😊 There was a friendly and open atmosphere in the meeting. Everything went well and the group was small enough to have informal discussions on topic. I got new ideas and contacts that surely help me in my own work with invasive alien plants.

😊 Interesting topics, enough time for discussions, successful arrangements

😊 Excellent! It was really well organised with interesting presentations, inspiring and nice people, and a great field day. The food was great!

😊 Erittäin hyvä - hyvin suunniteltu - ohjelma, erinomainen seminaaripaikka (Pilke), riittävästi aikaa verkostoitumiseen!

😊 Great two days of networking and sharing knowledge and ideas!



Challenges

- The seminar (like the webinar) reached/activated IAS professionals rather than NGOs/other local stakeholders.
- The info session that was arranged in Finnish for local people in connection to the seminar attracted only a handful of people, even though it was advertised very well in social media and with the help of posters etc. in Rovaniemi city by Pilke/Metsähallitus.



Photos: Susanna Winqvist

Study/networking trip to Tromsø 10-12 June 2024

We arranged a networking trip to Norway with an aim to learn about IAS situation in the country, to hear about the roles of different IAS management stakeholders and to see in practise how IAS management is done. An important aim was also to strengthen collaboration between Finland and Norway. We invited Barents IAS project partners from Luke and WWF to join us.

Participants:

Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke): Barents IAS Project Coordinator **Ella Ahti**

Rural Women's Advisory Organization: Executive Director **Christell Åström** and Communications Manager **Susanna Winqvist**

Photographer **Martina Motzbäuchel** (Valokuvaus Lichtwerk)

Hosts:

Invasive alien species expert **Bo Eide**, Tromsø municipality

Senior environmental expert **Cathrine Amundsen**, Tromsø and Finnmark County

Learnings from the trip

We toured the main island of Tromsø and other smaller islands with Bo Eide. We visited sites with "Tromsø palm" i.e Persian hogweed (*Heracleum persicum*) abundant everywhere but saw also sites where hogweeds have been weeded out. We also got to see areas with Nootka lupin (*Lupinus nootkatensis*) and other invasive alien plants such as Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*). Bo told us about the challenges and successes in the area and shared best practices.

During our visit, we also met Cathrine Amundsen from Tromsø and Finnmark County. She introduced us to the county's work against invasive alien species and we had a fruitful discussion about the challenges both our countries face and possible opportunities for cooperation.

Overall, the trip succeeded very well, it was beneficial to have a chance to see the IAS situation in Tromsø with own eyes, learn to recognize Nootka lupin, hear about the challenges and solutions in northern Norway and to share knowledge in informal and relaxed atmosphere.

There is a blog post about the trip available: [IAS heroes: Victories in the battle against Tromsø palm](#)

There is also a short video in which Bo Eide emphasizes the importance of early prevention: [Battling Tromsø's giants](#)



Study/networking trip to Umeå 18-19 June 2024

We arranged a networking trip to Sweden with an aim to learn about IAS situation in the country, to hear about the roles of different IAS management stakeholders and to see in practise how IAS management is done. An important aim was also to strengthen collaboration between Finland and Sweden. We invited Barents IAS project partners from Luke and WWF to join us.

Participants:

Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke): Barents IAS Project Coordinator **Ella Ahti**

Rural Women's Advisory Organization:

Landscape and Nature Management Expert **Marjaana Hassani** (Keski-Suomen MKN), Environmental Expert **Taru Koskinen** (Oulun MKN), Environmental Expert **Tuuli Mäkinen** (Itä-Suomen MKN), Communications Manager **Susanna Winqvist** (Maa- ja kotitalousnaisten Keskus)

Photographer **Martina Motzbäuchel** (Valokuvaus Lichtwerk)

Host:

Invasive alien species expert **Linda Backlund** from Västerbotten County (Länsstyrelsen, Västerbottens län)

Learnings from the trip

We visited the Storavan nature reserve, where a joint Interreg Aurora funded INSPIRE project between Swedish and Finnish partners is examining methods of invasive alien plant species eradication and habitat restoration. The area has sample plots to test different ways of controlling garden lupin (*Lupinus polyphyllus*) and restoring native plants. We learned about the different control methods and also weeded out garden lupins, dug up roots, planted meadow plants and sowed meadow plant seeds as well. Linda also showed us around the recreational area, where the widespread Himalayan balsam foliage has hampered its use. There, the Umeå municipality has taken action against the Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) with the help of sheep grazing. We also visited other sites in the area and shared lessons learned / best practices.

Overall, the trip succeeded very well and it was beneficial to have a chance to work together and share knowledge in informal and relaxed atmosphere.

There is a blog post about the trip available: [IAS Heroes: Collaboration across borders](#)

There is also a short video in which Linda Backlund emphasizes the importance of collaboration between the countries: [Collaboration across borders](#)



IAS heroes blog series

Originally, the project targeted to educate people to become IAS coordinators in Finland, Sweden and Norway. However, the different role of local stakeholders in the countries, differences in engaging in volunteer work, divergence in legislation etc. posed challenges to this action. Thereby, we decided to raise awareness, share inspiring stories and motivate to action with an “IAS heroes” blog series.

We produced 10 blog post introducing different kinds of people who are actively doing IAS management in their local environment or internationally. In addition, our project partner WWF produced two blog posts. The people presented in the blogs were e.g. village association members, farmers, NGO members and IAS professionals.

All the blog posts are available in [Finnish](#), [Swedish](#) and [English](#).

By mid-November there has been nearly 1030 individual blog readers on the Barents IAS web site. The most popular blog with 202 readers has been: <https://barents-ias.info/fi/blog/vieraskasvisankarit-porroiset-popsijat-pistavat-lupiinin-kuriin/> In general, the blogs in Finnish and in English have been more popular than the Swedish ones.

Lessons learned:

- People are willing to tell their stories, however, since most of the people are doing this work voluntarily it is good to reserve enough time to find the right people, finding a proper time to do interviews, get pictures and get comments for the texts.
- Also, it is good to be beware that producing the contents with several languages takes time.
- Organic reach in social media can be quite moderate. Reserving budget for paid media might be good solution.



Vieraskasvisankarit: Vieraslajitorjuntaa yrityksen luontotyönä

Luonnon monimuotoisuuden edistäminen on nykyisin yhä tärkeämpi osa myös yritysten vastuullisuustyötä. Käytännön toimintavaihtoehtoja on lukuisia. Haitallisten vieraslajien torjunta ja niiden leviämisen estäminen ovat toimennaitia joita myös yritykset



Bekämpningshjältarna: Invasiva arter bekämpas med samarbete och ihärdighet

Identifiera, bekämpa och upprepa är hörnstenarna i utrotning av invasiva arter. Möjligheterna att lyckas med bekämpningen ökar när myndigheter, medborgare och organisationer arbetar för samma mål. Den här artikeln inleder en bloggserie där du kan läsa bekämpningshjältarnas erfarenheter och



IAS heroes: Fluffy munchers keep lupines in check

Grazing sheep are a great weapon against invasive alien species.

[Read full article](#) →

28.2.2024



IAS heroes: No Tromsø palms in Bugøynes

The village of Bugøynes in Northern Norway has understood that prevention is the most cost-effective method of managing invasive alien species. Thanks to the work of active enthusiasts, the village's nature and population have been spared from the harmful impacts of hogweeds.

[Read full article](#) →

Inspiring IAS videos

Early prevention of biological invasions is most effective compared to cost-intensive control or eradication programs. Therefore, management measures at a premature stage of invasion are encouraged.

We produced six short videos with an aim to:

- Raise awareness of the IAS situation in the Barents region of Finland, Sweden and Norway: emphasize that IAS already exist in the area and pose threats to biodiversity and local communities.
- Highlight the importance of taking actions now, not in the future!
- Encourage municipalities, local stakeholders (associations, farmers etc.) and authorities to work in close collaboration. Emphasize the collaboration between neighbouring countries.
- Share knowledge / best practises of how to eradicate, control and otherwise manage IAS.

Videos

- **Norway - Battling Tromsø's giants:** Bo Eide from Tromsø municipality tells how Persian hogweed (*Heracleum persicum*) became a problem in the area and advises how to fight against the plant.
- **Sweden - The importance of spreading knowledge:** Johanna Engström and Gabriella Nygren from Skellefteå municipality discuss the importance of disposing IAS waste properly and share best practices on how to inform and activate inhabitants. Special focus on Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).
- **Finland - Containing the garden lupin with combine efforts:** Päivi Jokinen from Rural Women tells about the importance of IAS management and Mari Vauhkonen from Sotkuma village association (Eastern Finland) elaborates how local people have become excited about fighting garden lupins (*Lupinus polyphyllus*).
- **Finland - Staying one step ahead:** Petra Suontausta from Travel Utsjoki and Leena Niittyvuopio-Jämsä from Local Scout Group in Utsjoki discuss IAS situation in Sápmi and how scouts can take part in preventing IAS to appear/spread in the area
- **Finland - Combatting hogweed calls for cooperation:** Ulla-Maija Välikangas from the City of Nivala, tenant farmer Olli Kangas and landowner Anne Rauma discuss how rivers in Nivala, North Ostrobothnia spread IAS plant seeds over large areas and how different stakeholders have started to work together.



IAS videos: producing & promoting

- The idea was to create informative but inspiring and “relaxed” videos, that are easy to share in different social media channels. Thereby all the videos:
 - ✓ Are relatively short (~2-4 minutes)
 - ✓ People in the videos speak their native language
 - ✓ Have two versions: one with native language text (for accessibility reasons) and one with English text (to reach larger audience)
- The videos are available at [Rural Women's YouTube](#) channel as a playlist. They were published in October-November 2024, and by mid-November have been watched ca. 300 times.
- All the videos are available also at the [Barents IAS YouTube](#) channel.
- We have shared the videos also in Facebook (reach: 2 545) and LinkedIn (965 views of the post/799 views of the videos). In addition to our official accounts our employees have shared videos on their own accounts.
- We will share all the videos also in Instagram.
- The videos have been shared also at Barents IAS project’s social media channels.
- Since end of the year is not optimal for IAS management promotion, we will repost the videos next spring/summer and use them in our IAS work also later on.

Good to keep in mind

- When dealing with invasive alien plant species, timing is critical. Filming must be planned so that there are plants available.
- It is recommended to have an extra day(s) on each site, in case of bad weather.
- People are usually willing to co-operate, however timing (busy summer season & vacations) can be challenging. Plan well in advance!
- Since filming is done during IAS management season and it takes a while to produce videos (all the needed language versions), it would be best if project timing allows to make plans and produce videos during the first year of the project and the launch/promotion could be done next year’s spring/summer.



Impi's Day Challenge

- The associations of Rural Women's Advisory Organization have a long tradition of voluntary work, also within the fight against invasive alien plant species.
- This year to boost Barents IAS project activities we challenged our own associations to manage invasive alien plants, especially on Impi's Day on 11 June, which is our organization's traditional campaign day.
- The success in the fight against IAS increase when there is a long-term approach and when authorities, municipalities, citizens, associations and organizations work together, thereby we challenged also other associations and citizens from Finland, Sweden and Norway to join in.
- We promoted Impi's Day campaign in our own newsletters, social media channels and in the [Koti ja maaseutu](#) magazine. Barents IAS newsletter and social media channels were utilized to reach people from Sweden and Norway.
- All participants in the Impi's Day campaign were invited to report their activities to provide information on the extent to which invasive alien plants have been managed. We had a prize draw (Barents IAS gardening gloves) to activate people to report. We received ca. 20 reports. However, we are quite sure that there has been more activities, even though people have not reported them (it is quite common that our associations do a lot, but do not necessary report their work).



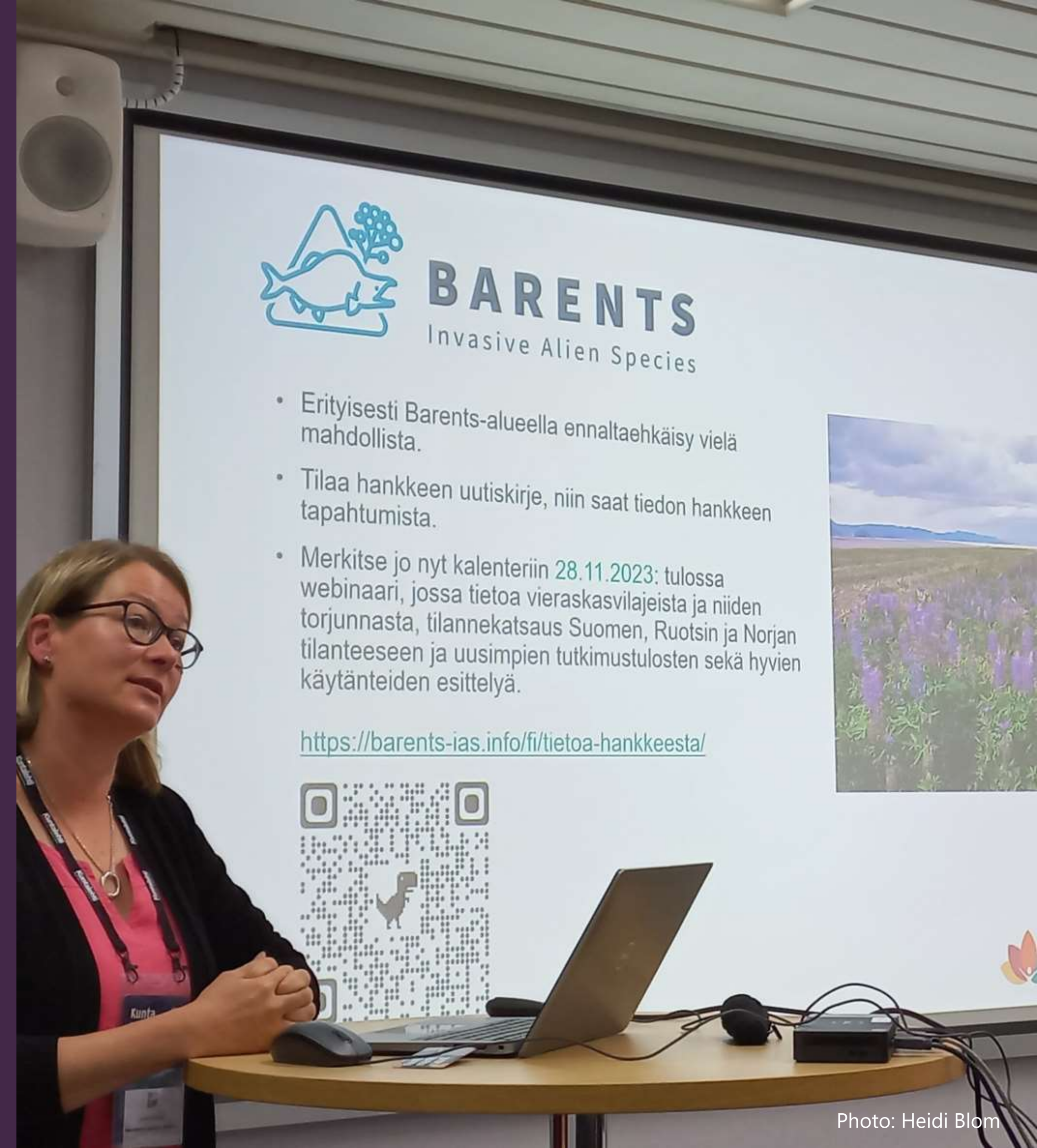
Photos: Leena Pullinen, Suvi Isosävi, Liisa Ruottinen-Partanen



- [Impi's Day Challenge](#)
- [Garden lupin bouquets on Impi's Day \(blog post of activities\)](#)
- [Working together to eradicate hogweeds \(blog post of activities\)](#)

Other materials and events

- Report (in English): *Invasive Alien Species in the Barents region*
 - ✓ Available at the Barents IAS website: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KtGQoi2Q5KQpZVzGNdk-p-4HystiGQkt/view>
 - ✓ Was delivered by email to participants of Barents IAS Forum international seminar in Rovaniemi.
- Information sheet (in Swedish): *10 tips för bekämpning mot invasiva arter med "talkoot"*
 - ✓ Available at the Barents IAS website: <https://barents-ias.info/wp-content/uploads/barents-ias-talko-broschyr.pdf>
 - ✓ Länsstyrelsen Västerbotten shared printed copies at their booth in March 2024 in Nolia Trädgård event in Umeå (the largest garden fair in Northern Sweden).
- Presentation (in Finnish) about the role & responsibilities of municipalities and cities regarding IAS / promoting Barents IAS project at Kuntamarkkinat 2023 (the main event for Finnish municipalities/cities, public sector in general).
 - ✓ A great way to have two-way dialog!



IAS information to everyone!

- To celebrate Rural Women's Advisory Organization's 90 years journey, we arranged a big [public event](#) in Narinkkatori, in the middle of Helsinki on September 7, 2023.
- We had one corner where we promoted different ways to enhance biodiversity, including IAS management. We had:
 - ✓ roll-ups with invasive alien plant pictures and information (as a background to raise attention and interest)
 - ✓ A4 laminated cards introducing invasive alien plant species in more detail
- The event was very successful and there were a lot of questions regarding "old" invasive alien plant species, but also questions regarding those species that have recently entered the Finnish national list of harmful IAS.

Good to keep in mind

- Roll-ups introducing invasive alien plant species are handy in fairs and other events.
- Being present at open public places is a good way to meet "random" people compared to fairs etc. where people come with purpose.



Photo: Susanna Winqvist



Photo: Kirsi Haapamatti



Photo: Susanna Winqvist

Collaboration is the key for successful IAS management!

