

AZERBAIJAN STATE OIL AND INDUSTRY UNIVERSITY (ASOIU)

POLICY ON REDUCING THE IMPACT OF ALIEN SPECIES ON LOCAL ECOSYSTEMS

Approved: 2024

Developed by: Sustainable Development Center and Department of Ecology and Environmental Management

Next Review Date: 2026

1. Description

ASOIU, through its Sustainable Development and Green Campus Strategy, is committed to maintaining ecological integrity and supporting biodiversity within and around its campuses. This policy provides a comprehensive framework for preventing, identifying, and reducing the impacts of alien (non-native) species that may threaten local ecosystems, native biodiversity, and the sustainability of green spaces managed by the university.

The university recognizes that alien species can cause significant harm to natural habitats, displace native species, and affect environmental balance. Therefore, ASOIU enforces this policy to ensure that only native and ecologically compatible species are introduced and cultivated within the university's operational areas.

2. Objectives

The main objectives of this policy are to:

1. Protect and restore native biodiversity in and around ASOIU campuses and field research zones.
2. Prevent the introduction and uncontrolled spread of alien plant and animal species.
3. Maintain ASOIU's Green Campus standards by ensuring environmentally responsible landscaping and restoration practices.
4. Educate and raise awareness among students, staff, and local communities about the negative impacts of invasive alien species.

3. Policy Framework

1. Import Restriction:

It is prohibited to introduce ornamental plants, seeds, or animal species from outside the region without prior assessment and authorization from the Department of Ecology and Environmental Management.

2. Containment Measures:

If decorative or experimental species must be cultivated, they may only be grown in controlled environments (such as pots, enclosed gardens, or laboratory conditions) to prevent accidental spread.

3. Native-Only Restoration:

The Green Campus Restoration Program prioritizes the planting of native and endemic Azerbaijani species during all greening, reforestation, or landscaping initiatives.

4. Ecological Risk Assessment:

Any new planting or biological introduction project must include an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) identifying potential threats of invasive species proliferation.

5. Monitoring and Removal:

ASOIU maintains an ongoing monitoring program to identify, map, and manage alien species within its campuses. When detected, eradication or control measures are promptly implemented following national and IUCN guidelines.

4. Research, Collaboration, and Awareness

ASOIU actively collaborates with the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, and local environmental NGOs to conduct studies on the presence and ecological impact of alien species in Azerbaijan. Educational programs, workshops, and seminars are held annually to promote awareness about:

- The importance of preserving native flora and fauna,
- The risks associated with invasive species, and
- Best practices for ecological restoration and campus biodiversity management.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Sustainable Development Center conducts annual biodiversity audits that include:

- Field assessments of vegetation and soil health,
- GIS-based habitat monitoring,
- Reporting of identified alien species and corrective actions.

All findings are documented in ASOIU's Environmental Sustainability Report and shared with relevant government authorities.

Progress indicators include:

- Number of alien species identified and managed,
- Percentage of native species in landscaping areas,
- Improvement in biodiversity indices over time.