Scientific Network for Risk Assessment in Plant Health (PLH RA)

Minutes of the 18th meeting

Held on 8-9 December 2022
WEB-conference

(Agreed on 26 June 2023)

Participants

- **Network Representatives of Member States (including EFTA Countries):**

Country	Name
Austria	Sylvia BLUEMEL
Belgium	Kristien BRAEKEN
Bulgaria	Tatyana, VELICHKOVA
Cyprus	Anthemis MELIFRONIDOU-PANTELIDOU, Athinais HADJIAFXENTIS
Croatia	Luka MUSTAPIC
Czech Republic	Petr KAPITOLA
Denmark	Jørgen SØGAARD HANSEN
Estonia	Birger ILAU, Mart KINKAR
Finland	Salla HANNUNEN, Juha TUOMOLA
France	Philippe REIGNAULT
Germany	Ernst PFEILSTETTER, Bernhard Carl SCHÄFER
Greece	Stavroula IOANNIDOU, Christos ARAMPATZIS
Hungary	Sándor BOGYA
Ireland	APOLOGIES
Iceland	APOLOGIES
Italy	APOLOGIES
Latvia	APOLOGIES
Lithuania	Loreta VALATKEVIČIENE, Monika LINKEVIČIUTE
Luxembourg	Nadine KIEFFER, Julien REINERS
Malta	John Baptist CASSAR
Netherlands	Dirk-Jan VAN DER GAAG
Poland	Magdalena GAWLAK

Portugal	Ana Paula CRUZ DE CARVALHO
Romania	APOLOGIES
Slovakia	Martin PASTIRČÁK, Marta MAGDOLENOVA
Slovenia	Alenka ZUPANČIČ
Spain	Laura Hernández Dato
Sweden	Sofia WINDSTAM, Johanna BOBERG, Niklas BJÖRKLUND
Norway	Micael WENDELL, Daniel Flø

- **Hearing Experts**

Antonio VICENT CIVERA (for item 3.7.); Claude BRAGARD (for item 3.1 to 3.7);

- **European Commission:**

Panagiota MYLONA, Jan VON KIETZELL

- **Observers:**

Nico Horn (EPPO); Barbara Colucci (Switzerland); Katica Arar (Bosnia and Herzegovina); (Norway); Alexandra Bulajic (Serbia); Hasenem Ertas and Aynur Karahan (Turkey)

- **EFSA:**

EFSA PLANTS Unit: Alexia ANTONIOU, Melanie CAMILLERI, Matteo CROTTA, Ewelina CZWIENCZEK, Alice DELBIANCO, Spyridoula DIMITROPOULOU, Ciro GARDI, Ignazio GRAZIOSI, Alex GOBBI, Agata KACZMAREK, Tomasz KALUSKI, Paraskevi KARIAMPA, Virag KERTESZ, Roumiana KRUSTEVA, Julia LOPEZ MERCADAL, Andrea MAIORANO, Marina MARTINO, Marco PAUTASSO, Eugenio ROSSI, Giuseppe STANCANELLI, Franz STREISSL, Emanuela TACCI, Sara TRAMONTINI, Sybren VOS

RAL: Ana LAMBERGAR

COM: Joana Isabel SOUSA LOURENCO

TS Team Transformation Partners: Silvia BONANNO

EFSA Art. 36 Grants
Alzbeta MIKULOVA (Università di Padova, Italy)

EFSA Procurement
Oresteia SFYRA (Greece)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

2.1 Agreement of the minutes of the 17th meeting of the Network held on 9-10 December 2021, web-conference.

The minutes were agreed by written procedure on 6 January 2022 and published on the EFSA website.

3. Topics for discussion

3.1. Introduction to EFSA Plant Health risk assessment activities

The EFSA's new organisational structure and the organigramme and areas of activities of the new PLANTS Unit were briefly introduced to the participants. The two plant health teams, the Plant Health Risk Assessment team and the Plant Health Monitoring team, as well as their main activities were further presented. The composition of the current EFSA Plant Health Panel was introduced. An overview of the plant health risk assessment activities and the tools used were presented including Pest categorisation, Quantitative Pest Risk Assessment and Commodity Risk Assessment. The main achievements and the actual challenges and perspectives were highlighted. The existing cooperation with EPPO and future collaboration steps were outlined. All EFSA plant health risk assessment outputs are published open access on the EFSA Journal dedicated virtual issues and on the EPPO Platform on PRA. The cooperation activities with EU MS, both the EFSA Art. 36 Tasking Grants to support the risk assessment process and the on-going and new calls on research to reduce risk assessment uncertainties were presented.

3.2. Introduction to EFSA Plant Health Monitoring activities and the new EFSA Network on plant health surveillance

The new PLANTS Plant Health monitoring team was presented to the Network introducing the three main mandates and the progress on the activities i.e. horizon scanning; pest prioritisation, pest surveillance. In addition, the newly established EFSA Network on plant pest surveillance was presented providing details about its composition, its objectives and the expected outcomes with particular emphasis on the capacity building on the EFSA pest survey toolkit by training the trainers operating on the topic in the MSs. Finally, the Network participants were invited to consult the EFSA website for the ongoing grants in particular on (i) the preparation of pest survey cards and on (ii) the estimation of pest survey parameters.

3.3. Introduction to EFSA pest categorisation of new and emerging plant pests and update on arthropod pest categorisations

The new mandate (2021-2026) on pest categorisations was introduced to the Network members. The mandate's focus is on the categorisation of new and emerging plant pests identified via MS border interceptions, outbreaks in the EU, EFSA horizon scanning and EFSA commodity risk assessments. Since the start of the mandate, nearly 60 pest categorisations have been adopted and published. An overview was given on the categorisations of arthropod pests.

3.4. Update on plant pathogen pest categorisations

An overview was provided on the composition of the Working Group, the work completed and that still ongoing. The results of the pest categorisations with some examples from recent scientific opinions were presented.

3.5. Introduction to EFSA quantitative pest risk assessment of new and emerging plant pests

The introduction to the mandate and terms of references was given and the list of insects and pathogens for the quantitative pest risk assessment was presented. The basic introductory knowledge of the Lepidoptera insects belonging to the family Pyralidae, namely: *Amyelois transitella*, *Citripestis sagittiferella*, *Elasmopalpus lignosellus,* and the bacterial plant pathogen *Xanthomonas citri* pv. *viticola* (Xanthomonadaceae) were given in order to make clearer the first results presented in the following item 3.6.

3.6. Highlights and comparisons from published and ongoing quantitative pest risk assessments

Some examples of key results (with their associated uncertainties) from published (*Amyelois transitella* and *Xanthomonas citri* pv. *viticola*) and ongoing (*Citripestis sagittiferella*) quantitative pest risk assessments were presented. Comparisons were made between scenarios and between pathways for a given pest, as well as between pests for a given risk assessment step (entry, establishment, spread and impact). Some highlights were also provided of the climate change analysis in the *X. citri* pv. *viticola* risk assessment.

3.7. Hotspots analysis of plant pest introductions: an update from the EFSA Art. 36 HoPPI project

Antonio Vicent (IVIA, ES) provided an update of the EFSA Art. 36 HoPPI project. The main aim of this project is to provide a tool for hotspot analysis of plant pest introductions to be integrated to future EFSA quantitative pest risk assessments

End of the 1st day

09 December 2022

Welcome back and apologies for absence

3.8. Climate suitability analysis for new and emerging plant pests: current activities and future challenges

An extensive presentation was provided on the current state of the climate suitability analysis for pest categorisation and quantitative pest-risk assessment at the PLH Unit. The climate suitability group was first introduced, then a detailed description of the systematic literature search used for Pest Categorisation and Quantitative Pest Risk Assessment was shown. Different approaches of climate suitability were presented to the audience including Koppen-Geiger climatic classification, CLIMEX and degree-days calculation. Finally, a practical

live demonstration of the use of newly developed web-based tools (SCANCLIM and DDMAP) was conducted on the R4EU platform.

3.9. Commodity risk assessment for High Risk Plants and for derogations to the EU plant health law: an update with examples from concluded and ongoing work

EFSA activities on commodity risk assessment for High Risk Plants dossiers and for derogation requests to provisions of the EU plant health law were presented. An example was given from the activities of the Working Group on High Risk Plants Section III, presenting the commodity risk assessment of *Prunus* plants for planting from Türkiye.

3.10. Update on the *Xylella* spp. host plants database

An overall presentation on the *Xylella* spp. host plant database was provided to the Network, including updated information on host plants identified in the last 3 years. Since beginning of 2022, the *Xylella* spp. host plant database is now updated by EFSA with new findings twice per year.

3.11. Plant Health: EFSA's social science research and upcoming awareness-raising campaign

ComCo presented the EFSA's social science research and upcoming awareness-raising campaign.

4. Items proposed by MS

4.1. NoBa Land Cover Retriever (NoBa LCR) - (EFSA Partnering grant GP/EFSA/ENCO/2020/03)

The NoBa Land Cover Retriever was presented by Finland. NoBa LCR was developed as part of the project 'Assessing the confidence in pest freedom gained in the past pine wood nematode surveys' and is a web application for retrieving Corine land cover data that is needed in planning statistically sound surveys of quarantine pests.

5. Any Other Business

5.1. Panel renewal 2024

The Chair of the meeting presented the timelines for the call and the selection procedure of the new EFSA Scientific Panels. The Call is planned to be launched in February 2022 and the new EFSA Scientific Panels are expected to start in July 2024. The applicant profiles and eligibility criteria, including the required technical competencies and key features of EFSA's future SP/SC experts were further explained. The call publication date was announced.

5.2. PLH Network meetings 2023

The possible dates for 2023 PLH Network meetings were proposed and an initial survey, according to the participants availability on the recommended dates, was carried out. Also, it was proposed having the next meeting held on site at EFSA Parma and conducted, when possible, by physical attendance. It will be however an hybrid meeting with possible virtual attendance for the MS representatives who cannot come to Parma on those dates. It was reminded that for physical meetings

EFSA rules allow generally the reimbursement of only one representative per MS.

6. Conclusions (s)

The meeting provided a clear overview of EFSA activities to support the EU plant health law in terms of risk assessment and preparedness to new and emerging plant pests. Details on main questions and answers from the meeting discussions are shown in the Annex. Next Network meeting was agreed as hybrid meeting format to be held in the second quarter of 2023, date to be agreed with Network

Closure of the meeting

ANNEX

Replies to questions:

Question 1

It was asked to provide more info about which pests will be analysed in the new mandate on priority pests.

Answer 1

Sybren Vos (EFSA) responded that regarding the priority pests, the mandate is to address the current quarantine pests. The ranking process is dealt with by the EC JRC in Seville (ES) and includes social and economic parameters added to the biological ones provided by EFSA. The final decision will be to the Member States and Commission.

Question 2

It was asked to provide clarifications on the criteria applied in the PeMo scoring.

Answer 2

Sybren Vos (EFSA) replied that there are 15 different criteria that are used for PeMo scoring that are available on EFSA guidelines. In case of pests for which not sufficient information is available, they will not undergo any scoring but instead they will be under close supervision in order to be included in future horizon scanning activities. It was highlighted that PeMo scoring is a quick assessment and is not replacing any Pest categorization or RA.

Question 3

The Portuguese representative asked whether the pest *Icerya aegyptiaca* could be imported with banana fruit.

Answer 3

Virág Kertesz (EFSA) confirmed that banana is indeed one of the preferred hosts of *Icerya aegyptiaca* and therefore could be a possible pathway for entry of this pest.

Question 4

The observer from Serbia asked for more information regarding the *Lasiodiplodia pseudothomabrae* as a potential quarantine pest.

Answer 4

Franz Streissl (EFSA) replied that the pest categorization of *Lasiodiplodia pseudothomabrae* was adopted recently in 2022 and more details will be included in the publication that is foreseen for January. He pointed out though that there is some uncertainty on the occurrence of the pest in Europe because it may have been misidentified as *Lasiodiplodia theobromae* in in the past.

Question 5

Claude Bragard (EFSA Plant health panel Chair) provided a positive feedback on the work done regarding pest categorisation and the new upcoming pests and requested a comment on evolution of the flow of new emerging pests.

Answer 5

Virág Kertesz (EFSA) highlighted the importance of this question in terms of resources and capacities since the current workload is handled by two working groups and the Plant Health Panel.

Giuseppe Stancanelli (EFSA) added that the number of pest commodities RA seems to remain stable and the amount of pest categorisation done per year (30-40) will be sufficient to categorize all the new pests that are of certain relevance for the EU.

Question 6

The Swedish representative asked the reason why the EFSA pest categorisations and risk assessments are not currently cited as references in the EPPO Global Database

Answer 6

The EPPO representative explained that this is due to rules of citation of the database but that this will be further explored with EFSA in the framework of the ongoing cooperation

Question 7

The Austrian representative requested the criteria for choosing the climate scenarios which were used for the comparison from quantitative pest risk assessments that were presented.

Answer 7

Marco Pautasso (EFSA) explained that in terms of emission pathway, three choices were available, and since there was not a significant difference, the middle scenario was adopted to simplify the process. For the bioclimatic variables a series of climate models were used for doing this analysis. And the 2041-2060 period, it was chosen because for risk managers is more important to use data from the middle rather than the end of the century.

The EC SANTE representative provided good and positive feedback on the work that is done regarding the climate change scenarios on quantitative pest risk assessments and also agreed in previous statements regarding the stability of pest categorisation flow and the efficient resources management.

Question 8

The EC SANTE representative asked if factors other than the climate like soil, microclimate, irrigation etc. could be integrated in the hotspot analysis in qPRA.

The EC SANTE representative asked if the uncertainty created by trade changes and climate change scenarios could be integrated in this tool.

Answer 8

Antonio Vicent Civera (IVIA, ES – HOPPI project) agreed on the importance of integrated these factors on future of the model.

He also explained that the tool is flexible enough to allocate these future changes like trade changes and climate change scenarios, simply by uploading such updated layers.

Question 9

Giuseppe Stancanelli (EFSA) asked about the HOPPI project whether it would be possible having a second model where the EU intra trade starting from the entry point could be included.

Answer 9

Antonio Vicent Civera (IVIA, ES – HOPPI project) confirmed that this could be possible, since there is no operational limitation regarding that in the tool. He only pointed out that the tool is aligned with the workflow of the qPRA group, so it is EFSA's decision to include it as part of the tool.

Question 10

The Austrian representative requested a more detailed explanation on the trade network map's significance.

Answer 10

Antonio Vicent Civera (IVIA, ES – HOPPI project) presented the proposed approach to create a map in order to estimate the probability of introduction of each plant pest in an area will a scale from zero to one. Following the approach of individual hotspot analysis for each pest.

Question 11

Giuseppe Stancanelli (EFSA) asked if the deadline of the project offers sufficient time to develop the tool to support the quantity pest risk assessment on the aspects presented.

Answer 11

Antonio Vicent Civera (IVIA, ES – HOPPI project) confirmed that one year is a sufficient period of time to develop the tool itself.

Question 12

The Austrian representative asked if other parameters such as humidity or solar radiation etc. are intended to be included in the developing model.

Answer 12

Antonio Vicent Civera (IVIA, ES – HOPPI project) replied that the current model was developed including only parameters related to temperature. However more variables based on the needs for a conductive pest risk assessment could be adopted in the future development.

Question 13

The German representative asked if EFSA received a feedback from the other countries, except Guatemala, regarding the additional information requested for the commodity Risk Assessment of Unrooted cuttings of Petunia and Calibrachoa.

He also asked whether the specialized production systems used in these countries will this be taken into consideration in the opinion, and requested the expected finalization deadline of this opinion for Guatemala.

Answer 13

Ciro Gardi (EFSA) replied that indeed the commodity Risk Assessment process started with Guatemala, since it provided with very detailed information but also Costa Rica has already sent a feedback and Uganda and Kenya are expected to do

it as well soon. He confirmed that during the evaluation process all the phytosanitary measures that are in place in the production site will be considered. The opinion for Guatemala is anticipated to be finalized in 2023 and is expected to contribute in the rapid process for the rest of the countries.

Question 14

The EPPO representative asked if in the process of commodity RA the initial assessment is examining the pests that are present in the country of the dossier, because that may also create a difference in the number of pests that are relevant.

Answer 14

Ciro Gardi (EFSA) confirmed that one of the first steps in the commodity risk assessment is to identify the pests present in the country of the dossier and associated with the commodity.

Question 15

Ignazio Graziosi (EFSA) asked whether the interest and sensitivity of the audience regarding plant health is the same as for food safety.

Answer 15

Joana Isabel Sousa Lourenco (EFSA) confirmed that the interest in food safety and the interest in plant health are indeed distinguished. However, she clarified that for the purpose of this study in terms of reaching the audience, questioning their interest in food safety was a good discriminant but it was definitely not the only aspect considered in these segmentations.

Question 16

The EPPO representative asked about the background of questioning the audience about their awareness of the phytosanitary certificate.

Answer 16

Joana Isabel Sousa Lourenco (EFSA) mentioned that since there are campaigns targeting an increased awareness of the certificate, it is important to understand where people seek regarding this awareness and therefore understand the risk that each individual citizen can represent. Moreover, these surveys gather important data regarding the compliance requirements that could further assist on the decision making.

Question 17

The Dutch representative asked about the communication tactics that are planned to get implemented as part of this awareness campaign.

Answer 17

Joana Isabel Sousa Lourenco (EFSA) replied that the communication strategy is not yet decided but that usually multiple communication channels are being used, depending on the message itself or the age segments that are being addressed.

Question 18

Ciro Cardi (EFSA) asked if it could be possible to integrate in the tool data such as the European forest map produced by JRC.

Answer 18

The Finnish representative confirmed that it is possible to include new data. However, he mentioned that in the developed tool the focus is to include numerical data that could be used for statistical analysis from the risk managers so the JRC data may not be suitable for this model.