Note to the Management Board: Update on EFSA work on bees and pollinators

1. Introduction

During the last decade EFSA has been actively involved in the protection of bee health by conducting prospective environmental risk assessments (ERA) of regulated products such as neonicotinoid active substances and developing new risk assessment (RA) methodologies for bees.

More recently, EFSA has received two mandates: one from the EC, under Regulation 1107/2009, to revise the Guidance on the RA of PPPs in bees (EFSA, 2013); and a second one from the EP, not under any regulatory framework, to advance the ERA of bees towards a system-based approach, the so-called MUST-B project (EFSA SC Panel, 2021).

EFSA's work on bees is accompanied by an increased engagement of stakeholders, as demonstrated by the establishment of the "EU Bee Partnership" (EFSA, 2018) and its platform for harmonised data sharing (EFSA, 2021), as well as by the establishment of an *ad hoc* stakeholder group for the revision of the bee Guidance (LINK). EFSA's work is also guided by an increased societal awareness of the critical issue of biodiversity loss and a demand for action to better protect both insect pollinators (including bees) and the environment.

Several Units in EFSA are engaged in activities on bees with the scope to ensure their protection, and increase awareness and collaboration (see the editorial on bees LINK).

Owing to the multidisciplinary nature of topic, in 2012, EFSA established an internal "**bee task force**" for the coordination and prioritisation of its work on bees (EFSA, 2012, 2014, 2016). The ambitions set out by EU policies and the expected outcomes of the EFSA Strategy 2027 suggest widening the scope for covering all relevant **insect pollinators**.

We welcome the opportunity to briefly inform the Management Board of efforts planned on bees and insect pollinators in the area of **regulatory update** (e.g. revision of the bee guidance), **cooperation** (e.g. stakeholder engagement and partnership with key actors) and **scientific developments** (e.g. ongoing activities and plan for future).

2. Next steps

- **Q1 2022**: the **EU Bee Partnership (EUBP) prototype platform** that was outsourced by EFSA to promote harmonised data collection and sharing on bee health among stakeholders (Simon Delso et al., 2021) will support the systems-based approach (EFSA SC, 2021), as well as for the implementation of ApisRAM towards 2025. A call for tender was launched in July 2021 to implement the EUBP prototype platform into an **operational platform** (i.e. including more data sources with analytics, a more user-friendly web interface with higher resolution maps, etc.). The project will kick off when the awarding process is finalised and will last 2-years.
- **Q2 2022**: EFSA to co-organise with EP/EC the next **EU Pollinator Week** Conference.
- **Q2-Q3 2022**: it is expected to publish the **revised bee guidance** for the risk assessment of plant protection products (Outline 2021).
- **Q3-Q4 2022**: identification of future projects and initiatives (from short-medium to long term planning) to advance the risk assessment of insect pollinators (**IPOL-ERA**) following the SPIDO roadmaps for actions.
- **2022-2025**: in line with with the Green Deal goals, EFSA recommended the implementation of its current work on bees and pollinators as new knowledge emerges (More et al., 2020), like the

implementation of **ApisRAM** beyond version 1 (i.e. to include new knowledge from relevant H2020 projects for the "Development of the ApisRAM model for risk assessment of honey bees". This implementation will include biological agents and thermal modules, additional EU landscapes, toxicological data on interactions between pesticides and other chemicals/stressors, and methodologies/evidence to conduct cumulative risk assessment and assess effects from invasive alien species.