Addressing the major challenges for pest risk analysis in Europe

**PRATIQUE**

**Introduction**

The expansion in the global trade of plant material over the last century has led to a steady increase in the rate of entry and establishment of new, economically or environmentally damaging plant pests, pathogens and invasive alien species. The threat is likely to further increase as a result of climate change and EU expansion. Recent examples of serious alien pests and diseases that have been introduced include the pathogen responsible for Sudden Oak Death (Phytophthora ramorum) and a maize pest, the western corn rootworm (Diabrotica virgifera virgifera).

Pest risk analysis (PRA) is central to tackling these invaders since it not only provides a procedure to assess the risks of entry, establishment and impacts but can also be used to identify the most appropriate options for the prevention of entry and management of outbreaks.

PRATIQUE will address the three major challenges of PRA:

- The lack of sufficient data required to effectively analyse the risks posed by pests to all member states of the EU
- The need to assess risk and analyse management options in ways that are meaningful, reliable and take account of uncertainty
- The importance of ensuring the PRA process is efficient and practical for end-users

PRATIQUE has 15 partners. It brings together pest risk analysts, phytosanitary experts, invasive alien species specialists, ecologists, economists and risk modellers from eleven leading institutions from across the EU, two international organisations, one institute from Australia and one institute from New Zealand. Sub-contractors in China and Russia are also involved.

**Strategic objectives**

PRATIQUE has three principal objectives:

- To assemble the datasets required to construct effective PRAs valid for the whole of the EU.
- To conduct multi-disciplinary research that improves the techniques used in PRA and
- To develop an advanced EPPO-PRA decision support scheme that meets its purpose, and is efficient and user-friendly

Specifically, PRATIQUE will produce the first structured inventory of PRA datasets for the EU and undertake targeted research to improve existing procedures and develop new methods for:

(a) Producing consistent summaries of risk that clearly take account of uncertainty
(b) Assessing economic, environmental and social impacts of plant pests
(c) Mapping endangered areas
(d) Preventing invasions through improved pathway risk analysis procedures
(e) Guiding actions during emergencies caused by outbreaks of harmful pests

The project outputs will be delivered as enhancements to the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) PRA scheme. EPPO, an intergovernmental organization responsible for European cooperation in plant health, has 50 members, covering almost all countries of the European and Mediterranean region.
Benefits

PRATIQUE will contribute to the development of sustainable, integrated plant health risk analysis and management strategies. This will be achieved through improvements to the functionality and user-friendliness of the current EPPO-PRA decision support scheme, with a new decision support scheme to combat pest outbreaks. In particular, PRATIQUE will:

- Ensure that limited EU member state plant health resources are targeted to the most important pests
- Substantially increase EU member states capacity to generate effective contingency plans and take optimal, rapid actions in plant health emergencies
- Harmonise methods for PRA production in Europe
- Encourage a greater number of PRAs to be produced
- Effectively reduce the time needed for PRA training
- Produce PRAs that will be more readily understood by regulators and stakeholders
- Continue on beyond PRATIQUE, since PRA is a core ongoing activity for EPPO, who will:
  - Host all the project deliverables, maintaining their availability through the web-enabled PRA scheme
  - Ensure that further appropriate developments are undertaken so that the PRA scheme remains fit for purpose and up-to-date

Further information about PRATIQUE may be obtained from:

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