

## An introduction to the PRATIQUE Research Project

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The 15 papers presented in this issue have been generated by PRATIQUE (Enhancements of Pest Risk Analysis Techniques), a research project funded by the European Union under its 7th Framework Programme from 2008 to 2011. The detailed background, objectives and structure of PRATIQUE have been outlined by Baker *et al.* (2009).

PRATIQUE addressed the major challenges for pest risk analysis (PRA) in Europe through 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 enhances the techniques used in PRA,
- to ensure that the PRA decision support scheme is fit for purpose, efficient and user-friendly.

Pest risk analysts, phytosanitary experts, invasive alien species specialists, ecologists, economists and risk modellers from 13 leading institutes in the EU, one from Australia and one from New Zealand, with subcontractors from institutes in China and Russia (see Table 1), undertook targeted research to review and improve existing procedures. They also produced the first structured inventory of PRA datasets for the EU and identified large numbers of pests in Eastern Asia that are highly damaging to European trees but have yet to invade Europe.

Improved methods were developed for:

- assessment of economic, environmental and social impacts,
- summarizing risk using effective, harmonized, consistent techniques that take account of uncertainty,
- mapping endangered areas,
- pathway risk analysis and systems approaches,
- guiding actions during emergencies caused by outbreaks of harmful pests.

The new methods for PRA were tested with a variety of the major pests and invasive alien species affecting the cultivated and uncultivated habitats of the EU, and independently validated by phytosanitary experts. Testing and validation were undertaken primarily by EPPO Panels on PRA Development, Phytosanitary Measures and Invasive Alien Species, expert working groups convened to prepare eleven PRAs, three international workshops on PRA, and two workshops on eradication, containment and contingency planning. Considerable assistance was also provided by the project's observers, notably from experts in the EU Plant Health Standing Committee and from the Canadian and US phytosanitary services.

The deliverables have been provided as protocols, decision-support schemes and computer programs with examples of best practice that are available to pest risk analysts through modules

**Table 1** Members of the PRATIQUE Consortium

PRATIQUE Consortium Member	Role	Principal contact
Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera), UK	Coordinator	R. Baker
Plant Protection Institute (PPI), Bulgaria	Partner	O. Karadjova
Institute of Botany (IBOT), Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Czech Republic	Partner	P. Pyšek
European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO), France	Partner	F. Petter
Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA), France	Partner	A. Roques
Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD), France	Partner	O. Pruvost
Julius Kühn-Institut (JKI), Germany	Partner	G. Schrader
University of Padova, Environmental Agronomy (UPAD), Italy	Partner	A. Battisti
Agricultural Economics Research Institute (LEI), Netherlands	Partner	J. Bremmer
Wageningen University (WU), Netherlands	Partner	A.O. Lansink
University of Fribourg (UNIFR), Switzerland	Partner	S. Bacher
CAB International (CABI), UK	Partner	M. Kenis
Imperial College of Science Technology and Medicine (Imperial), UK	Partner	J. Mumford
Cooperative Research Centre for National Plant Biosecurity (CRCNPB), Australia	Partner	P. De Barro
Lincoln University, National Centre for Advanced Bio-Protection Technologies (Bio-Protection), New Zealand	Partner	P. Hulme
Sukachev Institute of Forest Siberian Branch Russian Academy of Science	Sub-Contractor	Y. Baranchikov
State Key Laboratory of Integrated Management of Pest Insects and Rodents, Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences	Sub-Contractor	J-H. Sun

and direct links to the PRA scheme. The revised PRA decision-support scheme based on that prepared by EPPO has been computerized, providing:

- new users with context-sensitive guidance,
- experts with both a more efficient and user-friendly process and greatly enhanced access to key datasets and analytical tools,
- policy makers with an improved and robust scientific basis for managing risks,
- stakeholders with a more transparent presentation of the risks.

EPPO has already adopted the decision support scheme for PRA revised by PRATIQUE and is committed to its future maintenance and improvement.

The papers in this issue of the *EPPO Bulletin* cover many of the key aspects of PRATIQUE's work. All the project deliverables can be accessed from the project website (<http://www.pratiqueproject.eu>) and by logging into the CAPRA Network

hosted by EPPO <http://capra.eppo.org>. The revised EPPO decision support scheme for PRA can also be downloaded from the CAPRA website.

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## Reference

Baker RHA, Battisti A, Bremmer J, Kenis M, Mumford J, Petter F, Schrader G, Bacher S, De Barro P, Hulme PE, Karadjova O, Lansink AO, Pruvost O, Pyšek P, Roques A, Baranchikov Y & Sun J-H (2009) PRATIQUE: a research project to enhance pest risk analysis techniques in the European Union. *Bulletin OEPP/EPPO Bulletin* **39**, 87–93.