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15 January 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

Response to comments on the UK Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) for *Xylosandrus compactus*

Thank you for submitting views on the draft UK Pest Risk Analysis for *Xylosandrus compactus*. This letter is to notify you of the outcome.

Recommendations

The UK Plant Health Risk Group (PHRG) proposed the following recommendation:

- *Xylosandrus compactus* will not be made a quarantine pest and no statutory action will be taken against findings.

Background

Xylosandrus compactus, the black coffee twig borer, is a widely distributed tropical/subtropical ambrosia beetle. This pest causes significant damage to many economically important crops in the tropics such as cocoa, coffee, and various fruit tree species.

As *X. compactus* is an ambrosia beetle, it is highly polyphagous, and many known host plants are present in the PRA area. The UK climate is likely to be a limiting factor for this species' establishment. Climate modelling carried out by Urvois *et al*. (2021)[1] indicates that the majority of the UK is unsuitable for establishment. For some parts of Northern Ireland, Wales and southwest England there was disagreement between prediction models on whether the pest could establish – with roughly 25 to 50% of models saying that it could establish. Should establishment occur, winter temperatures in these areas may cause significant mortality and limit population levels. Outdoor establishment is rated as unlikely.

[1] Urvois T, Auger-Rozenberg M-A, Roques A, Rossi J-P & Kerdelhue C (2021): Climate change impact on the potential geographical distribution of two invading Xylosandrus ambrosia beetles. Scientific Reports 11 (1), 1339.

Economic impacts have been rated as small with medium confidence. The majority of impacts caused by *X. compactus* is in the tropics and to crops such as coffee and cocoa. Though *X. compactus* could attack a variety of woody plants that occur in the PRA area including apricot, cherry, pear and apple, damage to these hosts to date appears to be limited. Impacts in the PRA area are most likely to be limited to ornamentals in parks and gardens, as seen in other European countries. However, given the limited climate suitability, populations of *X. compactus* and potential impacts to hosts are expected to be small.

Environmental and social impacts have been rated as small with medium confidence. In its current range, *X. compactus* has caused limited environmental or social concern. From European outbreaks the majority of damage has been reported on urban greenery and ornamentals and no public concern has been reported.

Summary of responses

Three responses were received. One response from a private individual was supportive of the conclusions of the PRA, while responses from the Woodland Trust and the Wales Plant Health Evidence and Advisory Group were not entirely supportive and raised several concerns.

The supportive response agreed that statutory action would be inappropriate at the current time and only a significant increase of attacks in potentially susceptible regions would justify future assessment.

Responses from the Woodland Trust and the Wales Plant Health Evidence and Advisory Group raised multiple concerns primarily with the sections on establishment and environmental impacts. These included:

- Urban environments not being considered
- Impact of climate change
- Impact on native woodlands, especially temperate rainforests
- Impact to stressed trees such as *Quercus* and *Ulmus* from oak decline and Dutch elm disease

One response also raised some questions concerning the likelihood of entry via plants for planting and cut branches.

Some additional text and maps have been added to the PRA to help address these concerns. The concerns are also discussed in more detail in the next section.

Key concerns and government response

Concern – The PRA does not appear to consider urban environments, such as cities, which are warmer than the wider environment and could provide refuge for this pest.

Response – Due to lack of detail in current modelling studies, it is difficult to estimate the impact of the urban heat island effect on *X. compactus*. While offering higher temperatures

that would be more suitable for establishment, it is believed that humidity plays an important role in habitat suitability and development. In larger cities, the relative humidity is often lower than the surrounding rural environments. This is not thought to alter the potential for outdoor establishment.

Concern – One response requested consideration to be given to the impact of climate change on potential establishment before a decision on statutory action is made. Especially for parts of the UK where *X. compactus* could become established under current climate conditions and climate change could lead to further spread and larger impacts.

Response – While the Risk and Horizon Scanning team are working towards incorporating climate change into PRAs, as seen recently in the *Pochazia shantungensis* PRA, further discussion on the impact of climate change to *X. compactus* establishment is seen as unnecessary. The paper by Urvois *et al*. (2021) on climate change impact to *Xylosandrus* species explores the predicted presence of *X. compactus* in Europe under multiple climate conditions. As expected, these models predict higher potential presence in 2050. However, the majority of models (roughly 50 to 75%) still only predict the beetle could establish in the southwestern parts of Great Britain and small parts of Northern Ireland. Even under the most pessimistic climate change scenario of +4°C, the south of the UK will still be cooler than the majority of areas where *X. compactus* is currently found. Consequently, even if the pest were to become established, the limited anticipated impacts do not provide a scientifically sound basis for statutory intervention.

Concern – Two responses asked that more consideration be given to native woodlands, especially temperate rainforests of southwest England, southern Wales and Northern Ireland. As *X. compactus* is a tropical/sub-tropical pest which thrives in more humid conditions, the likelihood of establishment in temperate rainforests is higher, and listed hosts include a range of woodland tree species important to the UK such as *Quercus* and *Ulmus*.

Response –The concern for UK woodlands is recognised and a lot of consideration has been paid to the potential environmental impacts *X. compactus* could have on these areas. Damage has been recorded in parks, gardens and marquis plant community in mainland Europe on species such as holm oak (*Quercus ilex*) and bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*). However, this damage does not appear to significantly impact the ecology of these areas and there is little evidence to suggest that *X. compactus* is a serious risk to woodland tree and shrub species. Additionally, some parts of Britain and Northern Ireland may be suitable for establishment, but they are currently thought to be far below optimal for pest development, therefore any damage to woodlands would be significantly smaller than that seen in Europe currently. Even where temperate rainforests provide hot spots with an ideal microclimate, it is unlikely that populations could build to high enough levels to cause significant impacts.

Concern – As *X. compactus* will preferentially attack stressed plants, there is a higher risk to host species such as *Quercus* and *Ulmus* that are already under stress from oak decline

and Dutch elm disease, respectively. It was suggested the environmental impact should be increased to reflect this concern.

Response – Due to the sub-optimal conditions for outdoor establishment in the UK, it is unlikely that *X. compactus* populations would pose a significant risk to these species and damage to dying, stressed trees is more likely to occur from native bark beetles and other tree pests that are more adapted to the UK climate.

Concern – Establishment of the pest under protection in horticultural businesses in/or around areas with suitable climates (for example, temperate rainforests) could lead to the pest establishing outdoors.

Response – While establishment in heated botanical glasshouses and similar structures is considered likely, introduction to areas outside is considered unlikely due to the sub-optimal conditions for the pest's establishment.

Concern – With the introduction of the new UK-EU SPS agreement, there is likely to be a change to the inspection rate of plants for planting. It was suggested that the new agreement should be taken into account to future proof this PRA.

Response – The UK and EU have agreed to negotiate a Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement, which will establish a common SPS area. This is aimed at reducing trade barriers, including the elimination of certification requirements and routine SPS border checks, for most movements of plants and plant products between GB and the EU, and GB and NI. The outcome of negotiations is yet to be determined, but the overall conclusions resulting from this PRA would not be affected by such an agreement.

Concern – The likelihood of pathway 'cut foliage, branches and plant parts' should be increased from 'unlikely' to 'moderately likely' to reflect the increasing importation of these products.

Response – The most recent year's data for these commodities was added to table 3. There has been a slight increase in these commodity types from 2023 to 2024. However, this increase is not significant enough to justify a 'moderately likely' rating.

Next steps

The responses received have been addressed above and clarification has been made to the proposed PRA which will contribute to decisions on the future policy position for this pest.

I would like to thank those responding for taking the time to submit views on the stakeholder engagement. Your comments have been very valuable in helping to develop a policy position on this pest. I hope this letter demonstrates the reasoning behind our decision and that we have sought to find a solution which reflects the current position and

the views expressed from different stakeholders. We will be pleased to continue engaging with you about this pest.

If you have any views about how this review was handled, or its outcome, please let me know.

Yours faithfully,

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Recipients: Organisations listed below (excludes responses from private individuals)

Wales Plant Health Evidence and Advisory Group
Woodland Trust