Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
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Scottish Government
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28 May 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

Rapid Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) on *Xylosandrus compactus*

I am writing to seek your views on a UK Pest Risk Analysis for *Xylosandrus compactus*. A link to the rapid PRA can be found at the website given below:

https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/pest-risk-analyses/

We would welcome your views and comments on the PRA and the proposals for future action.

In submitting any comments you may wish to focus on the summary, key uncertainties and conclusion sections of the risk assessments and to consider the following:

- Are any factual corrections required?
- Your view on the appropriateness of the suggested proposals for future actions?
- Can you provide any additional information (or links to other sources of information) that may help address uncertainty identified in the assessment/management measures?
- Are there any risks that have not been adequately considered?
- Have you reviewed the risk assessment and consider that you have nothing further to add?

This review applies to the UK and is being conducted by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, with the agreement of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Government. The objective of this stakeholder engagement is to gather views from all interested sectors on the UK position. We will take all comments made into account in developing the UK position.

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.

The female adult tunnels into twigs and branches of a wide range of broadleaved plant species, where they lay their eggs. The tunnel is inoculated with ambrosia fungus to act as a food source for developing larvae. Tunnelling damage and introduction of bacteria causes twig flagging, wilting and dieback. The pest overwinters as adults in the twigs. Number of generations vary with climate but 3 to 5 have been recorded in Italy.

Xylosandrus compactus is native to East Asia but has spread to various parts of Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Oceania, and has recently been expanding its range into Europe, since its introduction to Italy in 2011. This has led to this pest no longer being listed as a non-European Scolytinae. *Xylosandrus compactus* is absent from the UK and has been intercepted twice, once in 2014 on Mango (*Mangifera indica*) fruit from Kenya, and in 2016 on bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*) plants for planting from Italy.

Plants for planting is considered the most likely pathway for entry into the UK, as *X. compactus* has a known preference for small twigs and branches and previous outbreaks in Europe are thought to be from the live plant trade. Other pathways assessed are cut branches and plant parts, wood products, and wood packaging material. All of which were thought to be unlikely as a pathway of entry.

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 data indicates the majority of the UK is unsuitable for establishment, with only small parts of Wales and Southeast England allowing pest presence. Winter temperatures, in areas where the pest could establish, may cause significant mortality and limit population levels. Outdoor establishment is rated as unlikely.

Xylosandrus compactus primarily attacks woody hosts and is therefore not expected to be a significant pest of protected cultivation in the UK. However, there are some cases where *X. compactus* could become established, such as glasshouses either for the growth of seedlings or botanical collections, and the protected cultivation of some high-value woody ornamentals such as Bonsai, *Acer,* and *Camellia*. The likelihood of establishment at these sites could be controlled by biosecurity procedures. Under protection, establishment is rated as likely.

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. Although, *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 more likely to be limited to ornamentals in parks and

gardens, as seen in European countries. However, given the limited climate suitability, populations of *X. compactus* and potential damage to PRA hosts is 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 from urban greenery and ornamentals and no public concern has been reported.

Due to the pest's size and life strategy, if a population became established, containment and eradication would be difficult. Continued exclusion is therefore the preferred management option. In the case of establishment, many management options are currently being researched such as chemical and biocontrol, however, the most effective method is sanitation and pruning of infested trees.

Recommendations for action

This PRA concluded that *Xylosandrus compactus* is unlikely to become established in the majority of the UK, and where establishment is possible, winter temperatures are likely to cause significant mortality. While establishment under protection is possible, procedures to isolate/check plants before entry into protected structures would help mitigate risk of entry into such structures. As *X. compactus* is considered unlikely to establish in the UK and the potential impacts to the PRA area are rated as small, it does not meet the criteria to be a quarantine pest. Therefore, the UK's Plant Health Risk Group does not recommend statutory action against this pest following the analysis presented in the PRA.

All responses should be sent to plantpestsrisks@defra.gov.uk

Responses should be received by **20 August 2025.**

Information provided in response to this stakeholder engagement, including personal information, may be made available to the public on request, in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental information Regulations 2004 (EIRs)

If you do not wish your response, including your name, contact details and any other personal information, to be publicly available, please say so clearly in writing when you send your response to the stakeholder engagement. Please note that if your computer automatically includes a confidentiality disclaimer, this will not count as a confidentiality request. Please explain why you need to keep details confidential. We will take your reasons into account if someone asks for the information under freedom of information legislation. However, we cannot guarantee that we will always be able to keep those details confidential.

Yours faithfully,

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