



This report compiles the output of an informal workshop with experts from Member States authorities and stakeholders. The document has not been adopted or endorsed by the European Commission and any views expressed may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the Commission and/or commitment to any future action.

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Workshop on possibilities to increase availability of PPPs (26 October 2023, Webex)

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Executive summary

The (un)availability of Plant Protection Products (PPPs) in Member States (MS), in particular containing low risk or biocontrol substances, has been raised by some Member States on several occasions and in particular during the discussions on the Sustainable Use Regulation (SUR) proposal.

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) organised an online workshop on possibilities to increase availability of plant protection products (PPPs) on 26 October 2023. This workshop focused primarily on availability of PPPs containing low risk and biocontrol substances. During the workshop there was an exchange of experience of Member States on barriers and also of good practices on use of current legal provisions on mutual recognition. It was also discussed how some of the proposals in the SUR and the Commission's response to a Decision requesting a study complementing the impact assessment of the proposal could contribute to the availability of PPPs.

The Zonal Authorisation Procedures – Improvements and Developments (ZAPID) workshop (Braunschweig, December 2023) is expected to build on the discussions of this workshop.

A total of 78 participants attended the workshop online, namely experts from 24 MS, 3 stakeholder organisations, and the European Commission (i.e., DG SANTE, DG ESTAT, and DG AGRI).

Introduction

The (un)availability of Plant Protection Products (PPPs) in Member States (MS), in particular containing low risk or biocontrol substances, has been raised by some Member States on several occasions and in particular during the discussions on the SUR proposal. In addition, more chemical active substances are expected to be not renewed in the future, e.g. where EFSA concludes that the substance is an endocrine disruptor. For instance, in the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed meeting of October 2023, four active substances were voted by the MS not to renew, and some MS indicated the need of alternatives.

The Commission, in collaboration with Member States' competent authorities via the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed and its Working Group on Post Approval Issues, is working towards improving availability of PPPs, in particular of those containing low risk or biocontrol substances.

A workshop on possibilities to increase availability of PPPs was organised on 26 October 2023 in virtual format, in view of providing inputs to the discussions which will be held in the ZAPID (Zonal Authorisation Procedures – Improvements and Developments) workshop (Braunschweig, December 2023).

In discussions prior to the workshop, MS identified barriers at different levels 1) lack of availability of actives substances at EU level, 2) lack of availability of products at MS level and 3) the actual use by the farmers. In case of the availability of products at MS level, the following problems were found 1) delays due to lack of capacity in MS authorities to evaluate the dossiers, 2) delays due to increasing requirements for risk assessment, or 3) applicants not asking for PPP authorisations in some MS. These barriers can lead either to a slow or no access of products to the market.

According to a preliminary analysis by the Commission, the lack of capacity in a MS can result from the fact that a full recovery cost system does not yet exist and fees of the dossiers to be paid by the applicants ends up in the country's general budget, rather than being ringfenced directly supporting the competent authority. Or those fees are too low and they do not cover the actual costs of the authorities. Capacity of the authorities to evaluate biopesticides needs to be enhanced in several MS.

This year, the Commission provides grants to six MS to hire new experts, for example microbiologists. The condition of the grants is that MS committed to work towards establishing or -if already exists- maintain a full recovery costs system. The Commission already provides relevant trainings (under Better Training for Safer Food) also on microorganisms, and other tools are foreseen in the SUR proposal to help to overcome barriers.

Who Participated in the Workshop?

The webinar was attended by stakeholders' representatives, experts from Member States and the European Commission.

A total of 78 participants attended the workshop online, namely experts from 24 MS, 3 stakeholder organisations, and the European Commission (i.e., DG SANTE, DG ESTAT, and DG AGRI).

Annex 2 lists the invited and participating Member States, and stakeholder organisations.

Outline of the Workshop

The agenda of the workshop and the presentations are attached in the Annexes.

The first presentations concerned the gap identified which triggered the organisation of the workshop, hence the lack of alternatives which were described by some Member States. After that, the point of view of the applicants was presented by stakeholders' representatives. Possible solutions were then articulated by some Member States which shared their experience and good practices (e.g., use of mutual recognition, prioritisation etc.).

After that, the chair of the ZAPID break-out session "Authorisation of PPP in the light of the Green Deal - Low risk, biocontrol and non-chemical PPP assessment" described how discussion will be followed at the ZAPID workshop.

The workshop was closed by DG SANTE who explained how some of the proposals in the SUR and the "Commission response to a Decision requesting a study complementing the impact assessment" of the proposal could contribute to the availability of PPPs.

A discussion followed the presentations that included the following topics among others: existing practices of the MS in case of lack of applications from the applicants; barriers to use Article 40.2 for mutual recognition; advantages and disadvantages of a provisional authorisation for low-risk products; role of the precision farming; need for a balanced approach between the refinement options and human/environmental protection in the assessment of PPPs needs to keep refinement practical and the assessment feasible.

Annexes

Annex 1: Agenda of the Workshop

14:00-14.10	Welcome, introduction	Karin Nienstedt – SANTE E4
14:10-14:50	Lack of alternatives (experience of Member States)	Eglė Vegienė, the State Plant Service under the Ministry of Agriculture (LT) Sari Autio, Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency Tukes (FI) Chara Panagopoulou, Hellenic Ministry of Rural Development and Food (EL) Ana Bárbara Godinho de Oliveira, Directorate for Health Protection Means (PT) (10' each: 40 min)
14:50-15:20	Point of view of the applicants	Marie Noelle Douaiher, Croplife Europe Hans Mataar, European Crop Care Association, ECCA Jennifer Lewis, International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association AISBL, IBMA (10' each: 30 min)
15:20-15:30	Break	(10 min)
15:30-16:15	Possible solutions- experience and good practices (use of mutual recognition, prioritisation etc)	Jacques Engel, Administration des Services Techniques de l'Agriculture (LU) Anne Steenbergh, Dutch Board for the Authorisation of Plant Protection Products and Biocides, CTGB (NL), Pavel Minář, Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture (CZ), (15' each, 45 min)
16:15-17:15	discussion	(30 min)
17:15-17:25	How will discussion be followed at the ZAPID workshop?	José Luis Alonso Prados, Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Tecnología Agraria y Alimentaria, INIA-CSIC (ES); chair of the break-out session ¹ of ZAPID
17:25-17:40	How some of the proposals in the SUR and the " <i>Commission response to a Decision requesting a study complementing the impact assessment</i> " of the proposal could contribute to the availability of PPPs? and Closing	Andrew Owen – Griffiths (<i>ex post comment: Gordon Rennick presented</i>), SANTE F3 (15 min)

¹ Authorisation of ppp in the light of the Green Deal - Low risk, biocontrol and non-chemical ppp assessment

Annex 2: List of Member States, EEA-States, and stakeholders' organisations participating to the workshop

Member States

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.

Stakeholder organisations

CropLife Europe (CLE)

International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association (IBMA)

European Crop Care Association (ECCA)

Annex 3: Presentations

1. [Lack of alternatives \(experience of Member States: LT, FI, EL, PT\)](#)
2. [Point of view of the applicants \(Croplife Europe, ECCA, IBMA\)](#)
3. [Possible solutions- experience and good practices \(use of mutual recognition, prioritisation etc\), LU, NL, CZ](#)
4. [How will discussion be followed at the ZAPID workshop?](#)
5. [How some of the proposals in the SUR and the "*Commission response to a Decision requesting a study complementing the impact assessment*" of the proposal could contribute to the availability of PPPs?](#)