

RATION PROJECT NEWSLETTER

Risk AssessmentT InnOvation for low-risk pesticides

Potential low-risk pesticides (LRPs) of natural origin are gaining in popularity, particularly in response to the European Green Deal. However, the data requirements for the authorisation process in the European Union (EU) are broadly similar to those for synthetic pesticides, which can hinder the market entry of potential LRPs.

The EU-funded RATION project (Grant Agreement n° 101084163) aims to make a significant contribution to improving risk assessment procedures for potential naturally occurring LRPs.

Duration: From 01.11.2022 to 31.10.2026

Budget: 7€ millions 100% funded by the European Commission

Consortium: 21 beneficiaries and 1 associated partner from 10 Member States and two non-EU countries

THIRD STAKEHOLDER FORUM (STaFO) WORKSHOP

Our third online Stakeholder Forum (STaFo) workshop was held on 20 March 2024.

It was an opportunity for our partner INRAE to present the survey on the low-risk pesticides (LRP) registration process in the Member States and the results received so far.

Our partner IBMA was able to present the tool developed by one of its collaborators, the Data Decision Tree on Natural Substances. This tool will be used in the RATION WP3 to apply the decision tree on natural substances to the model of active substances selected in the project.

The workshop was also an opportunity to present two other projects, GeneBEcon and a new EFSA project on new compound. The first one is a European project that will examine the innovation potential of gene editing, and the latter one is a project funded by EFSA, started in February 2024 and involves a number of RATION partners, aiming to provide new risk assessment procedures for low-concern pesticides (more information about it on this newsletter).

As a reminder, the StaFo is a body developed at the start of our project with the aim of accurately quantifying the expectations of the various stakeholders involved in plant protection, and comparing them with what is needed to ensure that the risks of LRP are taken into account in a coherent manner.

If you would like to become a member of the RATION Stakeholder Forum, please contact the management team at rationlrp@uth.gr

News from RATION

- On 26 and 27 February 2024, RATION took part, via our coordinator Dimitrios Karpouzas, in the 8th Meeting of the Expert Group on BioPesticides organised by the OECD.
- The three European projects RATION, GeneBEcon and BrightSpace are continuing to hold monthly (soon to be fortnightly) meetings, to ensure greater collaboration and coordination between them.
- From 5 to 9 May 2024, RATION will be taking part in the 34th annual SETAC conference in Seville through poster presentations: <https://www.setac.org/>
- From 15 to 18 July 2024, some of our partners will represent RATION at the workshop organised by MICROPe in Vienna: <https://www.micrope.org/>
- The next RATION face-to-face consortium meeting will be held in September 2024 at our partner INIA-CSIC in Madrid.

RATION IN-HOUSE INFORMATION



Read the testimonial from João Godinho, who has been part of the RATION adventure (almost) from the beginning.

- Can you briefly introduce yourself?

My name is João Godinho, Ph.D. candidate for the Agricultural Economics and Rural Policy (AEP) group at Wageningen University and Research (WUR), in the Netherlands. The team at WUR brings a vast record of experience in EU funded projects, encompassing contributions from the AEP group on economics and policy, and also from our colleagues both at the Toxicology (TOX) and Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA) groups.

- Can you tell us a bit more about your involvement in the RATION project?

Within WP1, that AEP is leading, our partners at Syngenta in collaboration with ECT Oekotoxikologie GmbH have conducted a review report of the current risk assessment procedures per low-risk pesticide (LRP) group, framing the regulatory requirements for the approval of such products, both within the EU, as well as in the USA. Furthermore, through a questionnaire developed by our partners at INRAE and INIA, and sent to every national authority in the EU responsible for the approval of LRPs, we have gathered data regarding the difficulties and challenges at both the active substance and product level assessment. By combining these insights, the AEP team aims to provide a synthesis report of the main regulatory challenges currently in place for LRPs, and identify the main opportunities to improve the risk assessment and approval processes of these products, within the EU market. This report will be developed with regular feedback from members of the RATION Stakeholders Forum, which was also established within WP1, and includes members from academia, regulatory bodies, industry, among other sectors. We aim to deliver a final report by October 2024.

- A word about your participation in a European project?

The work developed to this point has been made possible through the open channels of communication, that have helped to mitigate the boundaries between the different disciplinary backgrounds. As part of an European project such as RATION, this has been, and will keep being, an excellent opportunity to promote interdisciplinary collaboration, leading to true breakthrough scientific developments.



A WORD ABOUT A NEW EFSA PROJECT ON LRP

A new project with the title "fit-for-purpose innovative risk assessment for low concern pesticide active substances and uses" funded by EFSA (GP/EFSA/PLANTS/2023/04) was launched in February 2024. The project has a duration of 18 months and is coordinated by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Assoc. Prof. Zisis Vryzas) complemented by University of Thessaly, HAO-Demeter, Wageningen University and Research and CSIC-INIA as partners in the project. The main aim of the project is to develop a harmonised stepwise approach for a fit-for-purpose risk assessment of active substances that are falling under Part A of the Data Requirements (Regulation 283/2013) and that are potentially of low concern. The project and EFSA introduces a new term in the regulatory framework of "low-concern pesticides"

which are defined as those active substances that can be considered as potential of low risk at the stage of submission but not necessarily given the status of low risk upon completion of the risk assessment. The aim is primarily to support the identification of situations where some or all data are not required due to the "nature" of the active substance and its "proposed uses" or because "not scientifically necessary", or "it is technically not possible to supply. The project will deal with semiochemicals, botanicals, dsRNA, other biological materials (e.g peptides) and inorganics, while microbials are not considered. RATION and the specific project will collaborate closely in order to develop common grounds and solutions to facilitate the efficient introduction of biopesticides in the market.

Thank you for reading our newsletter.

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