XF-ACTORS - Xylella Fastidiosa Active Containment Through a multidisciplinary-Oriented Research Strategy

An EU funded project that establishes a multidisciplinary research program to answer the urgent need to improve prevention for the control of diseases caused by Xylella fastidiosa.

On 1 November 2016, XF-ACTORS project (Xylella Fastidiosa Active Containment Through a multidisciplinary-Oriented Research Strategy) formally started. Funded by the European Commission as part of the Horizon 2020 program, the international research project is the first in Europe entirely devoted to research on the bacterium Xylella fastidiosa, an important plant pathogen that causes several plant diseases. The project will be developed in four years with the participation of a consortium of 29 partners, coming from 14 countries worldwide, coordinated by the CNR- ISPP “Institute for Sustainable Plant Protection” of Bari (IT).

XF-ACTORS aims to develop a multidisciplinary research program in response to the urgent need to improve prevention strategies, early detection and control of Xylella fastidiosa. The overall objective is to develop a global strategy for the integrated management of serious diseases associated with Xylella fastidiosa, with the intention of preventing the spread of bacteria and to mitigate the economic, environmental and social aspects of epidemic conditions worldwide.

Xylella fastidiosa is widely distributed on the American continent where it has been
well known since the early 1800s, as the causal agent of severe diseases affecting relevant crops, as in the case of Pierce Disease in the Californian vineyards or the Citrus Variegated Chlorosis in Brazil. Its site of origin, from where it has travelled to the Old World with infected plant material. Unfortunately, the presence and distribution of the bacterium is no longer limited to the Americas, but it is currently threatening European agriculture, especially in the Italian region of Apulia where it is affecting olive groves, with more than 300,000 hectares of territory currently exposed to the infection. Other types of trees and shrubs are also already affected or an object of concern. This is the case of France where X. fastidiosa is damaging the myrtle-leaf milkwort specifically in Corsica and in the region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA), or Spain and Germany, where the subspecies of the Pierce disease has been detected. Therefore it is essential to carry out a research with a global perspective in order to combat this organism and avoid its further spread.

The contribution of each partner is crucial for the success of the project for its effective implementation and to reach the proposed objectives. The Project Consortium is confident that this collaboration between research centres from all over the world, including prestigious Institutions from overseas with consolidated expertise on this topic, will lead the scientific research towards making many steps forward on Xylella fastidiosa.

The project Management contemplates the presence of a Scientific Committee and also a Stakeholder Board to ensure that the consortium takes into account the interest of the stakeholders and end-users; there is also an Advisory Board, its role is to provide the project with points of view and advice, coming from other scientific communities and areas interested in the outcomes of the Project XF-ACTORS.

The actions foreseen for the XF-ACTORS project will be complementary to those carried out under Project POnTE (Pest Organism Threatening Europe), European project that focuses on minimising the risks of the introduction/impact of emerging pests (including Xylella Fastidiosa) threatening EU agriculture and forestry. The Ponte project is lead by CNR of Bari and it has been active since 2015.

**Countries**

Belgium, Brazil, Costa Rica, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Taiwan, United Kingdom, United States

**Contributor**

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