

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002778/24
to the Commission
André Rougé (Pfe)
(5 December 2024)**

Subject: Relevance of Commission financial support for the French-Brazilian initiative by Cirad and Embrapa to treat pathogenic fungus *Ceratobasidium* sp. in Guyana

The spread of the pathogenic fungus *Ceratobasidium* sp., a new cassava disease, poses a major challenge for Guyana.

Identified last year, the disease is threatening an essential crop for the French department's food supply and economy. Cross-border initiatives have been set up to tackle the threat, including a French-Brazilian scientific partnership between the Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (Cirad) and the Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária (Embrapa). The partnership's goal is to boost research and develop agro-ecological strategies to halt the spread of the disease.

As the European Union promotes international partnerships to address global challenges, including food security, it is important to provide financial support for efforts to combat this new disease in Guyana. The outermost region is a potential gateway for a pathogen that could affect the entire European and tropical market.

1. In light of this, does the Commission intend to financially support cross-border initiatives such as the Cirad-Embrapa partnership to combat the pathogenic fungus *Ceratobasidium* sp.?
2. Does the Commission intend to boost plant health surveillance and research programmes in the EU's outermost regions in general in order to prevent potential farming and food crises in Europe?

Submitted: 5.12.2024

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(17 March 2025)**

The Commission is aware of the challenges facing the EU's outermost regions and French Guyana in terms of food security and farming and is fully committed to supporting the development of these regions.

The outermost regions can receive support under the Single Market Programme ⁽¹⁾ for the implementation of phytosanitary programmes for the control of pests. However, *Ceratobasidium* sp. does not feature among the pests eligible for funding in the phytosanitary programme 2025-2027 ⁽²⁾.

The outermost regions can also benefit from support through the Horizon Europe programme for plant health research and innovation.

This area is a priority under cluster 6 'Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment' of the Horizon Europe Programme ⁽³⁾, and will remain a key focus in future work programmes ⁽⁴⁾.

Under Horizon 2020 ⁽⁵⁾ and Horizon Europe, numerous projects in plant health were funded, including initiatives addressing emerging threats from plant pests.

The outermost regions benefit from further support for agriculture and food autonomy under the Common Agricultural Policy and the Programme of options specifically relating to remoteness and insularity.

The French Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan supports research projects for agriculture through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development ⁽⁶⁾, enabling outermost regions to address plant health challenges.

The LIFE ⁽⁷⁾ programme under which the outermost regions benefit from bonus points for their applications, also supports biodiversity protection and projects relating to invasive alien species.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/690 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a programme for the internal market, competitiveness of enterprises, including small and medium-sized enterprises, the area of plants, animals, food and feed, and European statistics (Single Market Programme).

⁽²⁾ Commission Implementing Decision of 8.4.2024 on adoption of the multiannual work programme for 2025-2027 for the implementation of veterinary programmes for animal diseases and zoonoses and phytosanitary programmes for plant pests.

⁽³⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/cluster-6-food-bioeconomy-natural-resources-agriculture-and-environment_en

⁽⁴⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/strategic-plan_en

⁽⁵⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-2020_en

⁽⁶⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-agricultural-fund-rural-development-eafrd_en

⁽⁷⁾ https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en

Outermost regions also benefit from the ‘BESTLIFE2030: Grant scheme for biodiversity in EU Overseas’ ⁽⁸⁾ that finances small biodiversity projects with 95% financing.

⁽⁸⁾ <https://bestlife2030.org/>