

A global challenge has been launched to develop technologies to detect and manage European honey bee mites

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A new global innovation challenge has been launched to find technologies for detecting and managing European honey bee mites. This project aims to improve Australia's ability to detect exotic mites at the border and provide beekeepers with technology to manage Varroa mite effectively.

The honey bee industry is critical to Australia's agriculture, not only producing honey and wax but also pollinating crops, with the industry worth more than \$14 billion annually. Mites like Varroa are threatening Australia's honey bee industry.

Honey bee mites, such as *Varroa destructor* and *Varroa jacobsoni*, are small red-brown external parasites that can cause the collapse and death of honey bee colonies. If untreated, they weaken bees by feeding on developing pupae and spreading harmful viruses.

Through the global challenge, Australia has collaborated with CSIRO and Hort Innovation to invite innovators, problem solvers and organisations to provide advanced technology solutions for the surveillance and monitoring of mites. These will then undergo a desktop evaluation.

Potential future phases of the project would generate an independent evaluation of advanced technologies field tested in Australia for the beekeeping industry.

This project has been developed under the Catalysing Australia's Biosecurity (CAB) initiative. CAB aims to drive innovation and transformation across Australia's biosecurity system and is a collaboration between the department and CSIRO.