



A European Network of Policy Makers established

Deliverable D7.1



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An EU-wide farm network demonstrating and promoting cost-effective IPM strategies
Coordination and Support Action (CSA)
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Deliverable D7.1

A European Network of Policy Makers established

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A**bstract**

The deliverable at hand is entitled D7.1. “A European Network of Policy Makers established”. This document is part of work package 7 IPM policy engagement and sustainability strategy (WP7). The main objectives of WP7 are to keep policy makers and key stakeholders in the agri-food chain informed about IPM, connect policy makers in charge of the implementation of the Directive SUD and the National Action Plans with the European demonstration network, interact with policy makers and stakeholders and encourage them to participate in demonstration activities and promote the sustainability of the structure and methods developed during the IPMWORKS project. D7.1 is framed within Task 7.1, entitled “Establish an IPM Network of engaged policy makers across Europe”, which aims to establish both European and national networks of policy makers actively engaged in IPM. The activities at the European level are consisting of a regular European Parliament (EP) technical dialogue with the aim to create synergies between the IPM Demo Network and the SUD Directive 2009/128/EC. Concerning EU policy and network meetings, this was a challenge during COVID restrictions and the first two years of the project were lost as we were not able to organise physical meetings with MEPs etc. It was finally possible to organise the first dialogue in May 2022, including a field demo visit, a second dialogue in February 2023 during the EP Exhibition on IPMWORKS and a third dialogue during a dedicated IPMWORKS EP AGRI/ENVI Committee hearing on 23rd May 2023.

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1. IPMWORKS: Summary

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is based on a diversity of pest management measures (prevention, non-chemical control, best practices for optimizing pesticide efficiency, etc.). These are combined at the farm level to enable reduced reliance on pesticides, and therefore a decrease in the exposure of the environment and people to pesticides. Rare pioneer farmers throughout Europe are testing such IPM strategies and are succeeding in achieving good outcomes with low pesticide inputs. However the majority of European farmers still rely heavily on pesticides, with major environmental and societal impacts, because most of them have not adopted a comprehensive, farm-level and holistic IPM strategy so far.

The objective of IPMWORKS is to promote the adoption of IPM strategies, based on a EU-wide network of farmers, who both progress further in the adoption of IPM – through peer-to-peer learning, and joint efforts – and demonstrate to other farmers that holistic IPM “works”; i.e. allows a low reliance on pesticides with better pest control, reduced costs and enhanced profitability. IPMWORKS coordinates existing networks promoting IPM and launched new hubs of farms in regions or sectors where IPM pioneers were not yet engaged in a relevant network. Advisors coordinating hubs have a major role in facilitating knowledge sharing, coaching farmers to find their own IPM solutions, and organising local demonstration activities. IPMWORKS stimulates access to the ‘IPM Decisions’ platform and provides information on the IPM methods. It collects data for comparing IPM strategies, and shares results and dissemination material through channels widely used by farmers, broadcasting IPM success stories. It organises training, and produces training material, targeting both farmers outside the network and advisory services, in order to prepare for the future dissemination of the peer-to-peer learning approach and the general adoption of IPM throughout the EU.

The demonstration of cost-efficiency of IPM is based on data describing the details of cropping systems and pest management in farms involved in the network. IPMWORKS is also producing a range of data of various nature for dissemination and communication purpose: videos of farmers' testimonies, videos of demonstration events, leaflets describing cost-effective IPM-based strategies, etc.).

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2. Introduction

This deliverable D7.1. “A European Network of Policy Makers established” is part of work package 7 IPM policy engagement and sustainability strategy (WP7). The overall aim of WP7 is to actively engage policy-makers and stakeholders as expert advocates on IPM to strive for sustainability of the IPM Demo network beyond the project. The main objectives are to keep policy makers and key stakeholders in the agri-food chain informed about IPM, connect policy makers in charge of the implementation of the Directive SUD and the National Action Plans with the European demonstration network, interact with policy makers and stakeholders and encourage them to participate in demonstration activities and promote the sustainability of the structure and methods developed during the IPMWORKS project.

D7.1 is framed within Task 7.1, entitled “Establish an IPM Network of engaged policy makers across Europe”. This task aims to establish both European and national networks of policy makers actively engaged in IPM. The activities at the European level are consisting of a regular European Parliament (EP) technical dialogue in cooperation with Directorates-General (DG) AGRI/SANTE/ENV/RTD with the aim to create synergies between the IPM Demo Network and the SUD Directive 2009/128/EC, in order to explain technical developments in IPM practices, and identify future areas for improvement. A series of additional meetings were foreseen with various DGs and EU Agencies.

3. Establishment of the European Network of Policy Makers

According to DoA, and part of Task 7.1, a regular European Parliament (EP) technical dialogue was planned to be organised on IPM three times during the project. Concerning EU policy and network meetings, this was a challenge during COVID restrictions and the first two years of the project were lost as we were not able to organise physical meetings with MEPs and other Policy Makers.

At the European level, the organisation of face-to-face meetings in Brussels during COVID posed several challenges. Considering better to hold the first meeting face to face in order to establish a rapport between the network partners, it was requested to postpone this task by a few months. In hindsight, this requested delay was insufficient as we have depended in large part on the calendar of the EP and the willingness of MEPS to engage – which is often challenging. The most important is that we have finally achieved our targets to meet three times and with outstanding success, often not rivalled by many H2020 projects. It is probably the first time that two EP Committees have dedicated a hearing to an H2020 project, as was the case on 23rd May 2023.

To conclude, it was finally possible to organise the **first dialogue** in May 2022, including a field demo visit, a **second dialogue** in February 2023 during the EP Exhibition on IPMWORKS and a **third dialogue** during a dedicated IPMWORKS EP AGRI/ENVI Committee hearing on 23rd May 2023.

These events are explained below in sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3.

3.1. First Policy Dialogue and Demo conference, May 2022

The first Policy Dialogue and Demo conference under the IPMWORKS project were held (along with the two sister projects NEFERTITI and IPM Decisions), with the participation of several Directorates-General (DG) and Members of the European Parliament (MEP) as well as a number of national policy-makers in Brussels on May 10th and 11th, 2022, including a Farm Demo Conference ‘Sharing Innovation for sustainable agriculture’. The aim of these events was to raise awareness of Policy Makers at EU, national and regional levels, about the significance of Farm Demo networks to support the general adoption of sustainable farming practises based on holistic IPM, and about the issue of the sustainability of our network and approaches beyond 2024.



3.1.1. Policy Dialogue event on Farm Demo networks

The three H2020 projects NEFERTITI, IPMWORKS and IPM Decisions jointly organized a Policy Dialogue event on Farm Demo networks for sustainable agriculture in Brussels on the afternoon of May 10th, 2022. Presentations and discussions were combined with a visit to a demonstration farm that implements holistic IPM, thus significantly reducing pesticide use. This event took place on the day before the 2nd Farm Demo Conference (Brussels, May 11th, 2022).

The objectives of this Policy Dialogue event were (i) to inform relevant policy makers about the projects' networks, methods, and tools, and (ii) to discuss the longer-term sustainability and possible extension of the Farm Demo networks (and tools).

In the programme, the participants had the opportunity to visit to actual fields where IPM was being applied. Farmer M. Lemaire-Taelemans gave the presentation of the farm (part 1) & farming system, and Franky Coopman (Inagro) shared the highlights of IPM on the farm. In the other field, the participants heard Lieve De Smit (Flemish authorities), farmer and Franky Coopman about the research and demo activities and IPM implementation. The questions and discussions considered e.g., technical issues of IPM, but also the importance of independent advisory was emphasized, as commercial advisory for example on plant protection products was found undependable due to profit. Also the challenge of rental fields on short contracts was brought up, because that lowers the investing in the quality of the land.

At the farm premises, after the presentation of the farm (part 2), there was the Testimony of a Hub Coach by Jolien Claerbout (Inagro) describing the activities of hubs and Hub Coaches within the Farm Demo projects, which aim to create a confidential community, learn from each other, and solve challenges together. The Round table discussion about “The future of Demo farms to promote sustainable agriculture: what support from public authorities? was introduced by Nicolas Munier-Jolain, followed up with the French experience: supporting knowledge sharing for more sustainable agriculture through networks of demo farms by Philippe Delval (ACTA), as well as the Dutch example of funding demo farms by Richard Hondebrink (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality). In France, the demo activities are coordinated with hubs of ca. 10 farmers. The activities that are starting in the Netherlands are based on funding applied by the farmer himself and on demo activities done on farmers' own initiative. Both felt it necessary to support demo activities and strongly believed in peer-to-peer learning in developing agricultural operations. The discussions highlighted bottom-up development, farmer-orientated approach, which also increases farmer engagement. There was also discussion about the needs of different farmers and how to connect them. Cross visits had been perceived to be very useful, and the importance of peer-to-peer learning was highlighted. In the discussions about the role of demo farms to promote agricultural sustainability, and how it could be supported by the policies, were involved the representatives from DG AGRI and DG SANTE of the European Commission, EIP-AGRI, Ministries of Agriculture, regional governments and research and development organisations around Europe.

Summing up the event, EU Young Farmers Representative Anne Catherine Dalcq, from European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) emphasized that she was fully convinced of demo activities. It is important to provide farmers with information in an appropriate format and to establish a link between research, development and innovation activities and farmers. She highlighted that



cooperation, lifelong learning and innovation among farmers was interesting and normal for the new generation, but resources for that are needed in the middle of everyday haste and stress.

The representative of the EU Commission, Gisela Quaglia (DG AGRI) also highlighted the upcoming big Horizon Europe project, “Climate Farm Demo” where demo farmers are needed as well as in other information sharing too. In the exchange of information, demo activities have proven to be an effective model. Gordon Rennick (DG SANTE) highlighted the importance of demo farms combined with operational tools (DSS) for the efficient implementation of the SUD directive across Europe.

The results support and give input for the policy recommendations process of NEFERTITI WP6 and IPMWORKS WP7, and hopefully support the future demo farm activities for sustainable agriculture by the participants themselves.

3.1.2. Farm Demo Conference

The three H2020 projects NEFERTITI, IPMWORKS and IPM Decisions jointly organized a Conference on ‘Farm Demo – Sharing Innovation for sustainable agriculture’ in Brussels on May 11th, 2022. The conference was open to farmers, advisory services, retailers, agro-industries, researcher and policy makers involved in the dissemination of more sustainable agricultural practices. The objectives of the conference was to showcase the networks of demo farms, the associated tools supporting the improvement of farming practices, and the specific approach to promote peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge and experiences. More than 100 participants joined the Conference.

The Conference was introduced by both Mario Milouchev, Director in DG AGRI at the European Commission, and Clara Aguilera, MEP. Both of them highlighted the huge challenge for a drastic change in European agriculture to reach targets of reducing pesticide use, restoring landscape biodiversity and mitigating climate change, while supporting the economic profitability for farmers and ensuring the European food security and self-sufficiency. Mario Milouchev specifically emphasized the significance of demonstration at farm level for the new CAP, and mentioned that all member states are currently preparing their strategic plan for demonstration activities. He stressed the significance of linking explicitly demonstration activities with the Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS). Clara Aguilera MEP focused on the humanitarian crisis, the importance of securing food supply and the growing impact on farmers during these challenging times related to the war in Ukraine. She also praised the demo projects IPMWORKS and NEFERTITI for making an important contribution to the Green Deal.

The first part of the Conference was organized as successive panels. The first one gave the opportunity to present the main features of the three connected projects NEFERTITI, IPMWORKS and IPM Decisions. NEFERTITI and IPMWORKS are organizing farm demo networks and farm demo events, and are developing methodologies and resources aiming at maximizing peer-to-peer knowledge exchange and at facilitating the adoption of sustainable farming practices with the highest possible impact. IPM Decisions provides a supporting platform giving an easy access to Decision Support Systems for IPM implementation. The second and third panels were for testimonies of “Hub Coaches” and farmers, respectively. The three farmers showed their great motivation and commitment for sharing knowledge and innovation with other farmers, highlighting how much it is easier to look for solutions with the help and support



of other farmers sharing the same objectives and concerns. The main message from Hub Coaches was about the specific skills and methods for guiding farmers towards a holistic vision of farming systems, helping them to re-design the farming strategy to avoid problems rather than advising for emergency solutions to solve problems once they occurred. This requires both technical skills and specific facilitation skills that are important to disseminate within the community of advisory services. Hub coaching also requires time to get the full trust from the involved farmers. Finally, the fourth panel of Policy Makers illustrated the engagement of supporting policies providing funding resources at EU, national and regional levels to support farm demonstration.

A poster session during the lunchtime gave the opportunity for attendees to discuss and network. Posters presented the three projects and the EU FarmBook developed by the EURAKNOS/EUREKA project, supporting knowledge exchange between all AKIS actors in the European Union, the five national networks of IPM demo farms affiliated to IPMWORKS (namely DEPHY, LEAF, GROEN-AoZ, DIPS and PESTIRED), and resources and output of the NEFERTITI project, that is ending in 2022 (the Farm Demo training kit, how farm demo connects with AKIS, guidelines for virtual demonstrations, NEFERTITI practice abstracts, an overview of NEFERTITI past demo events, and detailed results from the various NEFERTITI thematic networks).

The afternoon of the conference was organized with three successive workshops, chosen by participants among six possible options:

- Detailed results of the French DEPHY network of IPM demo farms, where participants could learn both about the cost efficiency of pest management strategies with limited pesticide input, and about developed tools to coordinate and facilitate groups of demo farmers, and disseminate results.
- Pan-European decision support platform for IPM, provided and presented by the IPM Decisions project.
- The Farm Demo Training Kit.
- Lessons learned on Farm Demonstrations and recommendations for AKIS.
- Farm Demo platform and YouTube channel: when digital boosts learning.
- Virtual Demonstration Events: a learning solution in time of sanitary crisis.

The workshops were designed and facilitated to let participants actively engage in the discussions and have a concrete vision of the methods and resources produced by the three projects. The NEFERTITI guide for farm demonstration was available for taking home and further dissemination.

The Conference ended with a last panel about the future of sustainable farming. Bram Moeskops (IFOAM EU) and Stefan Top (AVR / CEMA) debated about the needs for both technologies and ecology-based processes to progress further towards sustainable agriculture. Jean-Baptiste Dollé (IDELE) introduced the issue of climate change mitigation as a major challenge for the future, that will be the focus of the project LIFE Carbon dairy, recently selected by Horizon Europe, and that will build on previous Farm Demo projects to develop farm demonstration. Anne-Catherine Dalcq, from CEJA, provided the closing words. She underlined the huge challenge for young farmers to commit and make farming practices evolve and meet the expectations of the European society. She pointed out that it is also important to invest to raise the attractiveness of the farming sector for young people. She stressed the significance of



connecting the diversity of involved actors, farmers, research, advisory services, food market chains and policy makers in this perspective. She stressed the need to bring knowledge to farmers in a form that is suitable, and peer-to-peer exchange facilitated by networks is fully relevant. She also stressed the significance of finding solutions for long-term funding of farm demo networks, as the challenges faced by the farming community will not be solved after the few years of the projects funded by the European Commission.

3.2. Second Policy Dialogue, February 2023

From February 13th to 16th, 2023, IPMWORKS organised the second policy dialogue through an exhibition at the European Parliament in Strasbourg “Towards a Europe without pesticides within the framework of the European Green Deal and the reform of the SUD/SUR directive”, with the support of Claude Gruffat MEP (Greens, France).

During the exhibition, IPMWORKS agronomy experts and farmers from across Europe presented the project’s results and good IPM practices face to face and individually to almost 60 MEPs for an average time of 15 minutes per MEP. MEPs were representative of a wide range of countries and political groups, many from the AGRI and ENVI Committees. Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski, the Presidents of both AGRI and ENVI Committees and a number of the EP (shadow) rapporteurs on the new SUR Regulation also visited the exhibition. The exhibition came at a crucial time when the EP is debating the reform of the Sustainable Use Directive with a proposal for a Regulation on the sustainable use of plant protection products (2021/2115) which includes IPM as the cornerstone in its implementation.

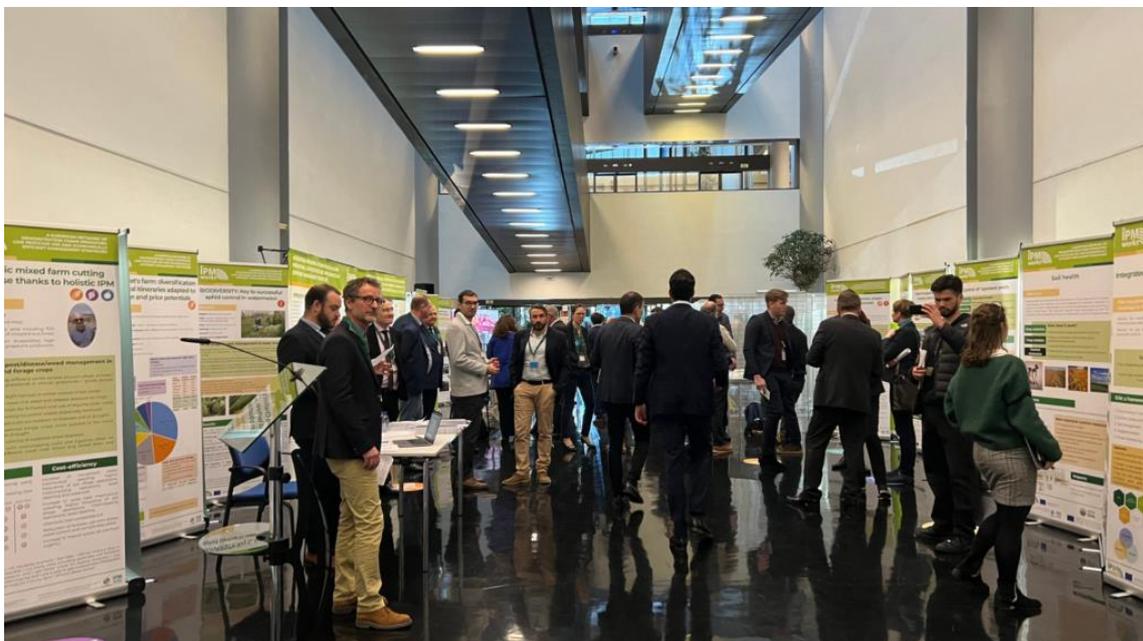


Figure 1. From 13 to 16 February 2023, IPMWORKS organised an exhibition in the European Parliament in Strasbourg “Towards a Europe without pesticides within the framework of the European Green Deal and the reform of the SUR”

The IPMWORKS exhibition was also joined by the IPMDecisions H2020 project, IBMA and IFOAM and included over 25 real case examples of how farmers are working to reduce or remove pesticides from their daily agricultural practices. IPMWORKS brought its team of agronomic experts in pest control and a number of pioneer farmers from several European countries to



Strasbourg to show its “demonstration” activities where farmers learn successfully from each other in a peer to peer process of learning.

The exhibition was visited by Commissioner for Agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski and Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Kyriakides Giorgos Rossides, as well as by the MEPs listed below:

- Sarah Wiener, Greens AU
- Saskia Bricmont, Greens BE
- Tom Vandenkendelaere, EPP B
- Margrete Auken, Greens DK
- Clara Aguilera, S&D ES
- César Luena, S&D ES
- Maria Eugenia Rodriguez Palop, GUE ES
- Jordi Solé, Greens/EFA ES
- Herman Tertsch, ECR ES
- Petri Sarvamaa, EPP FI
- Eric Andrieu, S&D FR
- Benoit Biteau, Greens FR
- Karima Delli, Greens FR
- Claude Gruffat, Greens FR
- Yannick Jadot, Greens FR
- Michele Rivasi, Greens FR
- Pascal Canfin, Renew Europe FR
- Gabriele Bischoff, S&D GE
- Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg, Greens GE
- Norbert Lins, EPP GE
- Maria Noichl, S&D GE
- Jutta Paulus, Greens GE
- Manuela Ripa, Greens GE
- Christine Schneider, EPP GE
- Frances Fitzgerald, EPP IR
- Billy Kelleher, Renew IR
- Sean Kelly, EPP IR
- Chris MacManus, GUE IR
- Colm Markey, EPP IR
- Grace O’Sullivan, Greens IR
- Maria Walsh, EPP IR
- Herbert Dorfmann, EPP IT
- Elena Lizzi, ID IT
- Daniela Rondinelli, S&D IT
- Paolo De Santos, S&D IT
- Paolo Di Castro, S&D IT
- Charles Goerens, Renew LU

- Tilly Metz, Greens LU
- Jan Huitema, Renew Europe NL
- Bert-Jan Ruissen, ECR NL
- Marek Belka, S&D PL
- Robert Biedroń, S&D PL
- Anna Fotyga, ECR PL
- Elzbieta Kruk, ECR PL
- Patryk Jaki, ECR PL
- Krzysztof Jurgiel, ECR PL
- Zbysław Kuzmiuk, ECR PL
- Bogusław Liberadzki, S&D PL
- Beata Mazurek, ECR PL
- Andzelika Anna Mozdzanowska, ECR PL
- Elżbieta Rafalska, ECR PL
- Bogdan Rzońca, ECR PL
- Sylwia Spurek, Greens PL
- Joao Albuquerque, S&D PT
- Alvaro Amaro, EPP PT
- Isabel Carvalhais, S&D PT
- Francisco Guerreiro, Greens PT
- Sandra Pereira, GUE PT
- Franc Bogovic, EPP SL
- Klemen Grošelj, Renew SL

3.3. European Parliament Joint hearing of ENVI and AGRI Committees on IPMWORKS

CIHEAM Zaragoza also put forward a proposal to the EP AGRI and ENVI Committees to hold a dedicated hearing on the IPMWORKS project. This was well received by the Bureau of both AGRI and ENVI Committees resulting in dedicated hearing of both Committees for the IPMWORKS project on 23rd May 2023.

The IPMWORKS hearing took place in Brussels, in the context of the current debates of the European Parliament about the project of European Regulation on the sustainable use of pesticides. It was a great opportunity to make IPMWORKS better known to MEPs, and to explain how IPM is indeed working across over 22 demo hubs and 250 farms across Europe. Two farmers (a field vegetable producer in Portugal, and a strawberry producer in Flemish Belgium) testified about their motivations and their solutions to effectively reduce the use of pesticides. Eduardo Crisol testified about his role as a Hub Coach/facilitator to promote biocontrol solutions and solutions to bring in auxiliary biodiversity in greenhouses in Andalusia. Two examples of farms, one in mixed farming in France and the other in field potato production in the Netherlands, were used to illustrate the diversity of strategic approaches to significantly reduce the use of pesticides in arable field crops.



Figure 2. Dedicated hearing of both AGRI and ENVI Committees for the IPMWORKS project on 23rd May 2023.

The hearing was also an opportunity to emphasize the important role of agricultural advisory services, with methods based on peer-to-peer knowledge exchange to promote the redesign of systems and find solutions adapted to each specific situation. Results were shown about estimates of pesticide use across IPMWORKS farms, and about self-assessment of farmers for (i) the quality of pest control, (ii) work load, and (iii) farm profitability. Finally, quantitative results were presented from the French IPMWORKS-affiliated DEPHY network (which has 12 years of experience in IPM promotion and data collection), to show that the adoption of strategies aimed at reducing dependence on pesticides does not necessarily result in a loss of agricultural productivity at the farm level.

3.4. Other key activities organized

Participation of Nicolas Munier-Jolain as an expert in the Study Group of the **EESC NAT Section** in the preparation of their opinion on the SUR Regulation in July 2022 - activity also organized by CIHEAM Zaragoza.

Nicolas Munier-Jolain together with Harm Brinks (DELPHY), Calypso Picaud (APCA/CRAO), Giovanni Pecchioni (SSSA) and Per Kudsk (AU) joined the **EIP-Agri EU CAP Network workshop ‘Innovative arable crop protection - using pesticides sustainably’** held in Amsterdam in April 2023, with a number of representatives of the European Commission, contributing to the visibility of IPMWORKS network to European Policy Makers.

In addition and in parallel, the IPMWORKS National Focal Points (NFPs) are carrying out **National Policy Dialogues** with the Agriculture, Environment and Food related committees of national/regional parliaments or similar entities/ ministries in charge of the implementation of the SUD Directive. The aim of these meetings at national level are to put in context the progress and outcomes from the EP technical dialogues, and to share the project strategy for self-



sustainability of the network after the end of the project, as well as the IPMWORKS consortium's recommendations for policy-makers to support active IPM demo networks and activities.

3.5. Activities still pending

In view of the wide ambition of Task 7.1 to cover a wide range of key institutions and stakeholders and in spite of the great achievement of the above activities (taking into account our initial delay resulting from COVID), a few remaining activities remain. WP7 leader will do its utmost to set up the remaining activities in the latter part of the project in 2023/2024. Needless to say, the outcome will depend on the willingness of those institutions and the opportunities that arise. Outreach and invitations will be made to the following:

Committee of the Regions NAT – Request to present IPMWORKS

Staff of **DG AGRI/DG SANTE/DGRTD/EFSA/EEA/ECHA** – we will organize an online Brown bag lunch to capture the geographically diverse settings of the above institutions. We will also propose a physical Brown Bag lunch in **DG AGRI** premises on the day prior to the IPM Conference 2024 (May 2024).

PAFF meeting – outreach and an informal request have been made via DG SANTE who are supportive and which is still pending. Please note that it is unusual for the Council working groups to receive H2020 projects. We will nevertheless continue to insist and will make a formal request once the informal route has been exhausted.

As a final note, we do not exclude an additional activity in cooperation with the **European Parliament**, as we envisage involving key MEPs in the IPMWORKS Conference in May 2024. The only challenge may be the EP elections scheduled for June. We will also explore online participation of MEPs in order to facilitate their participation.