



# Second evaluation report on interaction with networks and stakeholders

Deliverable D7.6



THIS PROJECT HAS RECEIVED FUNDING FROM  
THE EUROPEAN UNION' HORIZON 2020 RESEARCH  
AND INNOVATION PROGRAMME  
UNDER GRANT AGREEMENT N. 101000339

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### **How to quote this document:**

Guichaoua A., Jones A., Balduque J., Kerdal L., Munier-Jolain, N. (2024). *Second evaluation report on Interaction with Networks and stakeholders. Deliverable 7.6 of the Horizon 2020 project IMPWORKS (GA number 101000339)*, published on the project web site in October 2024: <https://ipmworks.net/category/public-deliverables/>.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N.101000339



An EU-wide farm network demonstrating and promoting  
cost-effective IPM strategies  
Coordination and Support Action (CSA)  
01 October 2020 – 31 March 2024 (54 months)

# Deliverable D7.6

## Second evaluation report on Interaction with Networks and stakeholders

**Planned completion date (as in DoA):** Month 48 – September 2024

**Actual completion date:** 25/10/2024 (M49)

**Work package:** WP7 – IPM Policy engagement and sustainability strategy

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**Type:** Report

**Version:** 1.0

### Dissemination Level

- 
- |                                     |           |  |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>PU</b> | Public   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <b>CO</b> | Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services) |
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# 1. Introduction

In order to optimise outreach and increase the impact of the project, WP7 seeks collaborations with several types of stakeholders, expecting to engage a diversity of stakeholders in the activities of an extended IPM Farm Demo network. The Deliverable 7.2 (First evaluation report on Interaction with Networks and stakeholders, submitted in October 2023) summarized the state of the art of the contacts and interactions established by IPMWORKS WP7, with European Stakeholders in the first half of the project as targeted in the Grant Agreement.

As the project officially started during the COVID crisis, some delays have been initially accumulated in terms of networking and relationships with European Stakeholders, due to physical meeting restrictions. Consequently, WP7 team focused in priority on the first group of stakeholders mentioned in the description of the Task 7.2 and representing primary producers (CEJA, COPA COGECA) as well as Research and Innovation actors and networks (EIP-AGRI Support Unit, SCAR-AKIS SWG, EUFRAS).

During the second phase of the project, WP7 continued interactions with these stakeholders (farmers, farmers organisations, advisory networks, CAP Network etc...) but also focused on stakeholders of the Agri-food chain (such as consumer associations, environmental NGOs, Civil Society representatives, Biocontrol and Plant Protections Products industries representatives, Certification bodies, etc...) to promote IPMWORKS results and IPM-sourced produces in novel market chains likely to provide both trade opportunities and added value for farmers.

## 2. Reminder of the updated action plan for task 7.2 as defined in D7.2

In deliverable 7.2 (First evaluation report on Interaction with Networks and stakeholders, submitted in October 2023), the Chapter 7 entitled “Prospects” described the updated action plan and foreseen actions to be realized under task 7.2 (Interactions with stakeholders: EU agri and research networks and consumer and food chain representatives) before the end of the project. This updated action plan is reported hereafter in blue:

1. **Organising a workshop with the actors of the agri-food chain (during the winter 2023/2024) to:**
  - *Remind the context "societal expectations concerning the reduction in the use of plant protection products" and the objectives of the project*
  - *Present the technical results obtained: show that systems can be proposed for different types of production in a variety of contexts. Ideally provide figures and show the diversity of the solutions deployed (which could be a source of inspiration for manufacturers' specifications).*



- Present the chosen method: setting up networks with a common methodology to identify priority issues (which may arise from downstream requests) and co-construct solutions.
  - Consider the multiplication and role of the downstream sector in the deployment of IPM approaches: inclusion in specifications, information to be provided to consumers/citizens on progress made, etc.
2. **Organising a workshop with the actors of the agricultural sector (during the winter 2023/2024) to:**
    - Present a summary of the technical results of the demonstration networks, with the possibility of testimonials from 1 sector leader and 1 hub coach.
    - Present the approach adopted to set up the networks: training of hubcoaches and sharing of methodologies, mobilization of stakeholders, definition of objectives and dynamic action plans, with one or two testimonials.
    - Present the measures put in place to "multiply" the results of these projects with the implementation of the IPM Toolbox and demonstration measures, presenting existing feedback
  3. These 2 Workshops will be followed by a more general dialogue with all relevant stakeholders invited during the **IPM CONFERENCE**, jointly organised by IPMWORKS and IPM Decisions on May 14, 2023, in Brussels.

Building on this plan, WP7 organised two specific events, answering the needs i) to keep communicating and networking with the actors of the agricultural sector, ii) to further engage communication and exchanges with the actors of the whole agri-food chain and iii) to showcase IPMWORKS final results to a wide European community, in Brussels on May 13 and May 14.

### 3. IPMWORKS European Policy and Stakeholders Seminar

The first event “**IPMWORKS European Policy and Stakeholders Seminar - Boosting IPM implementation in the EU**” aimed to engage key agri-food stakeholders in identifying tools, methods and practices to increase the implementation of IPM and reduce pesticides use in the EU. The event took place in COPA COGECA premises on 13 May 2024.

After a welcome speech by Paula de Vera (COPA-COGECA), followed by an introduction to the seminar and to IMPWORKS by Nicolas Munier Jolain (INRAe) and finally a keynote speech by Natasha Foote (EU Agricultural journalist) on the “future of EU Plant Protection and IPM Policies”, the seminar was divided in two distinct parts, corresponding to two main stakeholders’ targets: (I) Primary production ‘actors and (II) agri-food chain ‘actors.

#### I. Overcoming obstacles to broadening the implementation of IPM

**Moderation chaired by Alun Jones, CIHEAM Zaragoza** (IPMWORKS- WP7 IPM Policy engagement Leader).

1. Implementation of IPM in outdoor vegetable sector in Portugal (Bruno Neves - Farmer)
2. Farmers and Producers organisations point of view (Paula de Vera - Copa Cogeca)



3. The Role of Advisory Service Network in Knowledge Transfer (Urban Hrovatič - SEASN)
4. Biocontrol solutions for plant protection (Isabelle Pinzauti, IBMA Biocontrol industry)
5. The role of research, innovation, and knowledge exchange in promoting IPM implementation (Gisela Quaglia - DG AGRI)
6. Policy recommendations for scaling IPM adoption through IPM demo networks (Laure Triste & Hilde Wustenberghs - ILVO)
7. Discussion and questions

**The main outcomes of the first session are the following:**

The session on the development and extension of the peer learning methodology and the role of advisers in disseminating IPM highlighted several key conclusions:

The potential of peer-to-peer learning

Creating meaning and adapting to context: peer-to-peer learning, as implemented in the IPMWORKS project with farmer groups ('hubs'), enables farmers to give concrete meaning to IPM and adapt it to their own context. Exchanging experiences and directly observing the practices put in place by their peers makes it easier for them to learn and integrate IPM into their own farms. Farmers need robust, efficient and affordable solutions to overcome the numerous challenges they are actually facing.

Dissemination of knowledge beyond farmer groups: demonstration events organised by farmer groups help to disseminate IPM knowledge and good practice to a wider audience, beyond the direct participants in the project.

The central role of advisers and support needs

Technical expertise and facilitation skills: Advisers, as facilitators of farmer groups, play a crucial role in disseminating IPM. While they generally have solid technical expertise, they also need support to develop their facilitation, communication and group management skills.

To carry out their work, advisers need adequate financial support to cover the costs of organising meetings, travelling and communicating with farmers. Organisational support, particularly from advisory structures, is also essential to facilitate their work.

Advisers' networks, such as the European Forum for Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services (EUFRAS) and the South-eastern European Advisory Service Network (SEASN), play an important role in sharing knowledge and good practice between advisers from different countries and regions. The cross-visits organised by these networks help to disseminate innovations and reduce development gaps between regions.

The importance of political and financial support

One of the major challenges for the dissemination of IPM is the lack of adequate funding for advisory services, particularly in southern European countries. The commitment of public authorities is crucial to ensure sustainable financial support for advisory services and enable them to play their full role in the transition to more sustainable agriculture. Some funds dedicated to fund training, advices, and knowledge exchange activities and allowing to organise on-farm demonstration and peer-to-peer learning activities are available under the CAP Measure 78.01. These activities might also be funded in the framework of EIP Operational Groups under CAP measure 77.01.



To encourage the uptake of IPM by farmers, it is essential to offer both financial and non-financial incentives. Financial support could take the form of bonuses for farmers actively participating in learning groups, while non-financial incentives could include recognition of training gained through these groups or a reduction in production requirements.

#### The importance of collaboration between stakeholders

IPM dissemination requires a multi-actor approach involving farmers, advisors, researchers, professional organisations, public authorities, distributors and consumers if we want to reach the systemic and societal objective of sustainable agriculture on the long-term. Research and innovation multi-actor projects, such as IPMWORKS, play a key role in developing innovative solutions for IPM, creating decision-making tools and networking stakeholders.

In summary, the session highlighted the potential of peer-to-peer learning and the central role of advisers in disseminating IPM. However, for this approach to bear fruit, strong political and financial support is needed, as well as increased collaboration between the various players in the food chain.

## **II. How to engage the food industry, consumers and civil society into IPM based products?**

**Moderation chaired by Adrien Guichaoua, ACTA (IPMWORKS, WP7 IPM Policy-Engagement co-leader).**

1. IPM labelling: added value through sustainability in Switzerland (Sandie Masson - Agroscope)
2. Engagement of Agri-food chain (Stefanie de Kool - SMK)
3. Communicating with consumers about integrated pest management (Luigi Tozzi - Safe Food Advocacy Europe)
4. Towards solutions that work for everyone, farmers & the planet (Arnaud Schwartz - European Economic and Social Committee, NAT)
5. The role of crops protection sector to increase IPM practices (Anne Alix - CropLife Europe)
6. Making IPM work for people and nature (Clara Bourgin - Friends of the Earth)
7. Discussion and questions

### **The main outcomes of the second session are the following:**

The European seminar on IPM drew a number of conclusions regarding the challenge of involving agri-food chains, supermarkets, retailers and consumers in promoting IPM.

#### A need for economic incentives for farmers

One of the main barriers to widespread adoption of IPM is the lack of economic incentives for farmers. IPM practices can represent additional costs for farmers, particularly in terms of labour, advice and biocontrol products. Even though IPMWORKS is able to demonstrate that IPM-based strategies are cost-effective, any change in the strategy for crop management is always a risk for farmers that has to be compensated for by some kind of incentive.

For IPM to become a reality for the majority of farmers, it is essential that farmers are able to derive an economic benefit from it. This implies that players in the food chain, and retailers in particular, recognise the added value of IPM products and are prepared to pay a higher price for them.

#### The crucial role of retailers and the issue of labels





Retailers have a crucial role to play in promoting IPM because of their market power. By demanding IPM-certified products, retailers can encourage farmers to adopt these practices. This has been seen in the Netherlands with the 'On the way to Planet Proof' label.

However, the proliferation of labels and the complexity of certification schemes can be problematic. Consumers could get lost in the face of this diversity of labels and struggle to find their way around.

Some stakeholders question the relevance of a specific label for IPM, as this practice is already an obligation under the CAP. They fear that this will lead to a risk of greenwashing and that farmers' efforts will not be sufficiently rewarded.

#### The need for a comprehensive approach

Promoting IPM cannot rely on market mechanisms alone. It also requires strong policy interventions to support the transition to more sustainable food systems.

This includes better funding for advisory services, tighter regulations on pesticides and better remuneration for farmers for the ecosystem services they provide.

It is also essential to raise consumer awareness of IPM issues and empower them to make informed choices.

#### The importance of communication and awareness-raising

Beyond labels, it is important to communicate transparently about farmers' practices and highlight the efforts they are making to produce more sustainably. Projects such as IPMWORKS, professional organisations and public authorities have a role to play in sharing IPM success stories and giving farmers a voice.

In conclusion, the involvement of agri-food chains is essential to promote IPM. To meet this challenge, it is crucial to combine economic incentives for farmers, transparency and simplification of certification systems, and strong political action to support the transition to more sustainable food systems.

### **III. Final conclusions and recommendations of the seminar**

The European seminar on promoting IPM brought together key players in the food chain (farmers, advisers, researchers, representatives of NGOs and the plant protection industry) to discuss the challenges and opportunities involved in implementing IPM.

#### Key messages:

IPM is an effective approach to reducing pesticide use and promoting sustainable agriculture. Concrete examples, such as the Portuguese farmer Bruno Neves, demonstrate that IPM can be successfully implemented and significantly reduce pesticide use while maintaining quality production.

Widespread adoption of IPM requires a paradigm shift. It is not simply a matter of replacing one pesticide with another solution, but of rethinking production systems as a whole based on a holistic approach.

Farmers are willing to commit to IPM if they see an economic interest in it. The lack of financial incentives is a major brake on the adoption of these practices. Farmers must be paid for their efforts to produce more sustainably.

Advisory services play a central role in disseminating IPM. They need adequate financial and organisational support, as well as a strengthening of their skills, particularly in group facilitation and communication.

The involvement of downstream players in the food chain is essential. Retailers have an important role to play in sourcing IPM products and recognising the added value of these products.



Communication and awareness are crucial. It is important to raise awareness of IPM among consumers and empower them to make informed choices.

Key recommendations:

Put in place incentive-based public policies to encourage the uptake of IPM. This includes increased support for advisory services, financial incentives for farmers who adopt these practices, and better integration of IPM into the CAP.

Strengthen collaboration between players in the food chain by creating multi-stakeholder initiatives, involving farmers, advisors, researchers, the agri-food industry and NGOs, are needed to remove barriers to IPM.

Develop certification systems that are credible, transparent and accessible to farmers. Simplification and harmonisation of labels are important to avoid confusing consumers.

Communicate transparently about farmers' practices and value the efforts they are making to produce more sustainably.

General conclusion:

The transition to more sustainable agriculture, based on the principles of IPM, is a major challenge that requires collective action. The seminar highlighted the importance of an integrated approach, involving all players in the food chain and supported by ambitious public policies.

A short report of the seminar is also available on IPMWORKS website:

<https://ipmworks.net/2024/06/21/ipmworks-european-policy-and-stakeholders-seminar-boosting-ipm-implementation-in-the-eu/>.

## 4. IPM Conference 2024

In order to answer the objective of disseminating the results of IPMWORKS to a wide EU audience, the project organised a “Final conference” in **Brussels on May 14**, together with the IPM Decisions project. **IPMWORKS** and **IPM Decisions** are two sister H2020 projects contributing to the challenging objective of reducing pesticide use and impact in European agriculture by promoting a holistic approach for Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The IPM Conference 2024 (Brussels, 14 May 2024) was the opportunity to showcase the results of both projects.

About **150 attendees** participated to the conference, **from 25 countries**, including quite a number of representatives of the **European Commission** interested by the achievements of the projects. The attendees represented the wide variety of actors and stakeholders targeted by the WP7 and IPMWORKS in general:

- Farmers and Farmers' organisation (individual, national and EU organisations)
- Advisory services (national and EU networks)
- Research Institutes (fundamental and applied research)
- Universities and education bodies
- Policy makers (regional, national, european)



- Civil Society (environmental and consumers NGOs)
- Retailer organisations and certification bodies
- Enterprises (biocontrol, Plant Protection Products, other SMEs)
- CAP Networks (national and european)

The Conference was supported and introduced by the European Commission, through the introductory speech of **M. Diego Canga Fano (DG AGRI)**, who delivered messages from the Commission regarding the sustainable use of pesticides in the EU, some weeks after the SUR proposal has been rejected by the European Parliament.

The session '**IPM in action**' showed an excellent overview of holistic IPM as implemented by IPMWORKS farmers, thanks to the testimony of farmers (present on stage, or showcasing their motivations and technical IPM options through nice videos), Hub Coaches, and IPMWORKS experts.

**Three Hub Coaches** were invited to explain the specific IPMWORKS methodology based on **peer-to-peer learning**, and the daily work of Hub Coaches with farmers, to help them find IPM solutions adapted to the farm specificities, and demonstrate to a wider audience that it is indeed **efficient and cost-effective**.

**Parallel interactive workshops** gave the opportunity to showcase some outcomes of the projects, including the IPM Resource Toolbox, the IPM Decisions platform, and the IPMWORKS e-learning modules, and to go deeper into some major aspects of IPM development.

The round table "**towards a shared vision of sustainable agriculture and IPM in th EU**", gathered several actors/stakeholders such as Farmer Organisations (Paul de Vera – COPA COGECA), Research Institutes (Thierry Caquet – Scientific Director for Environment – INRAe) and Policy Makers (Vincent Van Bol – FOD Volksgezondheid – in charge of the SUR negotiation for the Belgium federal state).

The **coordinators of the two projects** expressed their plans for the long-term sustainability of the IPMWORKS networks and the IPM DECISION Platform.

Finally, **Urban HROVATIC, a young adviser and a representative of SEASN** (Southeastern European Advisory Service Network) expressed his view for the future of the EU agriculture and the role of advisory services to overcome the challenges of the sector.

The conference was announced by the **EU CAP NETWORK**:

[https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/events/ipm-conference-2024\\_en](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/events/ipm-conference-2024_en).

The **full programme** of the conference and the conference booklet are available at the following link:

<https://ipmworks.net/2024/05/09/ipm-conference-2024-holistic-ipm-reducing-pesticide-use-agenda-available/>.

The **presentations** of the conferences are available at the following link:

<https://ipmworks.net/2024/07/15/ipm-conference-2024-holistic-ipm-reducing-pesticide-use-2/>.



# 5. Summary of the interactions with Networks and Stakeholders

This chapter aims to summarize the conclusions of the exchanges engaged with the different kind of actors, stakeholders and networks from the launching of IPMWORKS project. We highlight their key roles and the actions they may undertake to promote the general adoption of IPM practices across the EU, so as to reach the EU Farm to Fork targets.

## 5.1. Farmers and farmers 'organisation: IPM is the objective

### 5.1.1. Farmers: convinced but looking for support and profitability

Farmers are aware of the importance of IPM for consumer health, environmental protection and the sustainability of their farms.

They are ready to embark on this path but need support, particularly in terms of training, access to decision-support tools and biocontrol solutions.

The profitability of IPM is crucial to its widespread adoption. Farmers need to be remunerated for their efforts and the additional costs involved in implementing these practices. Any change in farming strategy, even when adopting cost-effective solutions, comes at a price of either monetary investment or human engagement, and this has to be rewarded by some kind of economic added value for the farmers.

The simplification of administrative procedures and the introduction of financial incentives, such as bonuses or a bonus system, are mentioned as levers to encourage the adoption of IPM.

### 5.1.2. Farmers' organisations: advocacy for a favorable framework and accessible tools

Farmers' organisations, such as Copa Cogeca, recognise the importance of IPM and the crucial role of farmers in its implementation.

They insist on the need for a clear and harmonised regulatory framework at European level, which encourages innovation and facilitates access to biocontrol solutions.

They also stress the key role of advisory services in supporting farmers in the transition to IPM and call for better funding for these services.

## 5.2. Policy makers: The crucial role of policy in implementing IPM

The relationships with policy makers highlight the importance of public policy in encouraging the adoption of IPM and removing obstacles to its widespread implementation.



### 5.2.1. Create an enabling regulatory framework

Set ambitious and binding pesticide reduction targets: the lack of a clear and ambitious regulatory framework, as demonstrated by the abandonment of the proposed Sustainable Use Regulation (SUR), is holding back the adoption of IPM.

Speed up authorization procedures for biocontrol solutions: the slowness of authorisation procedures (7 to 10 years in Europe compared with 1 to 3 years in Brazil) is a brake on innovation and the availability of these solutions for farmers.

Support research and innovation in the field of IPM: the development of new biocontrol solutions, decision-support tools and innovative cultivation practices is essential to meet the challenges of IPM.

### 5.2.2. Financing the transition to IPM

Allocate sufficient funds to advisory services: the lack of funding for advisory services, particularly in southern European countries, limits their ability to support farmers in implementing IPM.

Set up financial incentives for farmers: Incentives for farmers who adopt IPM and compensation for the additional costs associated with these practices could encourage the use of IPM.

Direct CAP funding towards more sustainable practices: some CAP funds could be redirected to support IPM and other agro-ecological practices.

### 5.2.3. Accompanying change

Strengthen training for advisers in IPM and group facilitation techniques: advisers need their skills enhanced to effectively support farmers in adopting IPM.

Promote experience sharing and peer-to-peer learning initiatives: projects such as IPMWORKS, based on the exchange of experiences between farmers, are models to follow, and to expand at EU level.

Raise consumer awareness of IPM issues and farmers' efforts: better communication is needed to promote IPM products and encourage consumers to choose them.

In conclusion, public policy has a decisive role to play in making IPM the norm rather than the exception: it is essential that decision-makers take strong and ambitious measures to support the transition to more sustainable agriculture, based on the principles of IPM.

## 5.3. Advisory organisations and networks: to promote and support IPM implementation

### 5.3.1. The key roles of advisors

Facilitate peer-to-peer learning: Advisers engaged in the IPMWORKS network act as 'coaches' for groups of farmers engaged in IPM. They organise meetings, field visits and demonstration events to facilitate peer-to-peer sharing of experience and learning. This methodology should be expanded widely at EU level.

Providing one-to-one technical advice: advisors help farmers adapt IPM principles to their specific context. They help them identify pest problems, choose resistant varieties, implement suitable cultivation practices and use biocontrol solutions.



Disseminating knowledge and innovations: advisors play a crucial role in disseminating the latest scientific and technical advances in IPM. They inform farmers about new decision-support tools, available biocontrol solutions and good pest management practices. Advisors keep up-to-date on most recent innovation through networking with other peer advisers engaged in IPM promotion, researchers, and private companies developing innovative solutions.

Collecting data and evaluating the effectiveness of IPM: advisers can play an important role in collecting data on pesticide use, the effectiveness of IPM practices and the economic impact of these practices. Such detailed quantitative data is essential for convincing the farming community that IPM-based strategies are cost-effective, and worth adopting.

### 5.3.2. Advisor needs

Financial support: setting up effective advisory services requires adequate funding. Advisers need resources to organise meetings, travel to the field, communicate with farmers and train in the latest IPM developments.

Skills enhancement: advisers need training to strengthen their technical skills in IPM, but also to develop their facilitation, communication and group management skills.

Access to tools and information: advisers need easy access to decision-support tools, information on innovative solutions (biocontrol, technologies, cultivars, etc.) and scientific data on pest management.

Institutional support: support from professional organisations, research institutes and public authorities is essential to create a favorable environment for IPM and to value the role of advisers.

In short, advisers play a central role in implementing IPM as facilitators, trainers and technical advisers to farmers. To fulfil these roles, they need adequate financial support, enhanced skills and easier access to IPM tools and information.

## 5.4. Research organisations: producing knowledge adapted to farmers' need

### 5.4.1. Develop innovative and tailored solutions

Innovative cropping practices: agronomic research is essential to identify and promote cropping practices that enhance crop resistance to pests and reduce disease pressure, such as crop rotation, the choice of resistant varieties and tillage techniques.

Decision support tools: research institutes are essential in developing and improving decision support tools, such as pest monitoring systems, risk prediction models and information platforms, which help farmers make informed decisions on pest management.

New biocontrol solutions: faced with the need to reduce the use of chemical pesticides, research institutes play a key role in developing and improving effective biocontrol solutions.

### 5.4.2. Transfer knowledge and support change

Train advisers: research institutes are key players in disseminating scientific and technical knowledge about IPM to advisers and other actors, particularly through training, workshops and publications.



Organise trials and demonstrations: field trials and demonstrations on pilot farms are essential to validate the effectiveness of IPM solutions, adapt practices to local conditions and convince farmers of their value.

Facilitating dialogue between stakeholders: research institutes can play a facilitating role by creating spaces for dialogue and exchange between the various stakeholders in the food chain (farmers, advisers, industry, NGOs, consumers) to identify obstacles to IPM and find joint solutions.

Research institutes are key players in making IPM a reality for European farmers. Their role goes beyond simply producing scientific knowledge; they must also be actively involved in disseminating innovations, training stakeholders and creating an environment conducive to the adoption of IPM.

## 5.5. Civil Society: a need for clarity and commitment

### 5.5.1. Confusion surrounding labels and mistrust of ‘greenwashing’

Stakeholders point to the multitude of existing labels and certifications, which can create confusion among consumers.

There is also a fear of ‘greenwashing’, i.e. the misuse of eco-labels for products that do not live up to their stated promises.

Consumers, although aware of the issues surrounding pesticides, have difficulty finding their way around and identifying products that are genuinely derived from sustainable practices.

### 5.5.2. Need for transparency and clear information

Initiatives such as the ‘pesti score’, which would make it possible to assess pesticide use on a scale, are mentioned as a means of achieving greater transparency. Transparency on farming practices, and specifically on pesticide use, could moreover be an approach to protect European agriculture from the ‘unfair’ competition of non-European agriculture with less environmental constraints.

The importance of communicating clearly about IPM practices and highlighting the work of committed farmers is stressed.

Consumers need accessible and understandable information to make informed choices and support more sustainable agriculture.

### 5.5.3. Importance of the role of policy and regulation

Stakeholders stress the need for a clear and ambitious regulatory framework to regulate pesticide use and promote IPM.

The absence of strong regulation risks maintaining IPM as a niche practice and not encouraging enough farmers to embark on this path.

In conclusion, the civil society is interested in transparency of practices, clarity of information and political commitment to more sustainable agriculture. The major challenge for consumer associations would be to ensure that consumers can easily identify IPM products and that this practice becomes the normal mode of producing.





## 5.6. Retailers, distributors and supermarket: a pivotal but complex role

### 5.6.1. Commit to purchasing and adding value to IPM products

Move from a 'niche' logic to an integrated approach: at present, IPM is often perceived as a niche practice, reserved for customers prepared to pay more. Retail has the power to change this by integrating IPM into its standard purchasing criteria, rather than as a premium option.

Offer producers a fair price: to encourage farmers to adopt IPM, retailers must commit to paying them a fair price that covers the extra costs involved in implementing these practices. The aim is not to 'give farmers a present', but to recognise the value of their work and their commitment to sustainable agriculture.

### 5.6.2. Develop credible and transparent labels and certifications

Fight greenwashing and label confusion: the proliferation of labels and certifications, which are often unclear to consumers, risks creating confusion and mistrust. Retail has an important role to play in promoting credible labels, based on precise criteria and independently controlled.

Highlighting producers' efforts: in addition to labels, retailers can enhance the value of IPM by clearly communicating farmers' efforts to produce healthy, sustainable food. Initiatives such as organising farm visits, taking part in farmers' markets or highlighting the stories of farmers committed to IPM could be developed.

### 5.6.3. Work in collaboration with other players in the chain:

Dialogue and co-construction with producers and advisors: distribution must engage in constructive dialogue with farmers and advisors to identify obstacles to the adoption of IPM and find joint solutions.

Support the development of independent advisory services: better funding for advisory services, particularly through voluntary contributions from distribution, would enable more farmers to be supported in the transition to IPM.

Encouraging innovation and research: distribution can also contribute to innovation by financially supporting IPM research and the development of new biocontrol solutions.

In conclusion, distribution has a pivotal role to play in making IPM the norm in agriculture. By committing to promoting IPM products, supporting producers and communicating transparently, retailers can contribute to more sustainable agriculture and meet consumer expectations for healthy, environmentally-friendly food.

## 5.7. The challenges facing the biocontrol and plant protection product industries

### 5.7.1. Challenges for the biocontrol industry

Slow authorisation procedures: one of the main obstacles faced by the biocontrol industry is the length of product authorisation procedures in Europe. IBMA, points out that this process can take up to 10 years, which slows down innovation and the marketing of much-needed solutions. This slowness is due in particular to regulations that are ill-suited to the specific features of biocontrol, which is governed by the same legislation as chemical pesticides.





Lack of awareness and training: another major challenge is the lack of knowledge and experience among farmers and advisers on the optimal use of biocontrol solutions. It is crucial to invest in training and dissemination of knowledge to ensure effective use of these products.

Need for a clear, harmonised definition: the lack of a clear, harmonised definition of biocontrol at European level complicates the authorisation process and creates uncertainty for manufacturers. The adoption of a common definition is essential to remove these obstacles and encourage the development of the sector.

### 5.7.2. Challenges for the plant protection products industry

Adapting to new sustainability requirements: the plant protection products industry must adapt to new sustainability requirements and the growing demand for solutions that respect the environment and human health.

Innovation and development of integrated solutions: the focus is on innovation and the development of integrated solutions, combining different approaches for sustainable pest management. This involves going beyond simply replacing chemical pesticides with biocontrol solutions, and rethinking production systems as a whole.

Transparency and communication: the industry must be transparent about the composition and impacts of its products, and communicate clearly about the efforts made in terms of sustainability.

Investment in research and development: the industry must invest heavily in research and development to offer innovative and sustainable solutions, such as biocontrol products, precision technologies and decision support tools.

Promotion of good practices: emphasis must be placed on training farmers in good agricultural practices and the reasoned use of plant protection products, in particular through the development of independent and competent advisory services.

## 6. General conclusion from the exchanges with stakeholders on IPM: A consensus on the challenges, a search for solutions

Discussions between the various players involved in IPM (producers, associations, advisers, researchers, policy, NGOs, industry) reveal a consensus on the challenges to be overcome if IPM is to be widely adopted, as well as a shared desire to find solutions to make this approach the norm in agriculture.



## 6.1. Main challenges identified

**Lack of ‘ready-to-use’ solutions:** While concrete examples of successful IPM exist, IPM remains complex to implement and requires adaptation to the local context. The lack of ready -to-use solutions, the difficulty of choosing the right practices for each situation and the need for personalised support are all obstacles to the mass adoption of IPM.

**Difficulties in accessing alternatives to pesticides:** The slowness of authorisation procedures for biocontrol products in Europe, the lack of knowledge about their optimal use and the difficulty of accessing these products, particularly for small farms, are major obstacles.

**Need for support and training for farmers and advisors:** Supporting farmers in the transition to IPM is crucial. Yet advisory services lack resources, and training on IPM and alternatives to pesticides is insufficient.

**Need for better remuneration for farmers:** The cost of the transition to IPM, the increased risk associated with certain practices and the potential loss of income are holding back the adoption of IPM by farmers. Better remuneration for IPM products is essential to encourage producers to embark on this path.

**Lack of clarity and harmonisation of labels:** The multitude of existing labels, often unfamiliar to consumers, makes it difficult to promote IPM products. The risk of ‘greenwashing’ and the lack of a harmonised system at European level undermine the credibility of labels and their effectiveness.

## 6.2. Possible solutions

**Investment in research and innovation:** Developing innovative cropping practices, decision support tools and finally biocontrol solutions that are more effective, quicker to implement and compatible with chemical pesticides is crucial to offering viable alternatives to farmers. Systemic research is also needed to demonstrate to the farming community that IPM strategies based on the integration of existing solutions is cost-effective.

**Strengthening and funding advisory services:** Better funding for advisory services, particularly public and independent ones, is essential to support farmers in implementing IPM. The effective use of decision-support tools and the dissemination of knowledge are also important.

**Commitment from retailers and consumers:** Mass retailers have an important role to play by committing to buying and promoting IPM products, at a fair price for producers. Raising consumer awareness of IPM issues and highlighting farmers' efforts are also crucial. Transparency on pesticide use is an approach for providing economic added value for farmers engaged in IPM, and for protecting European agriculture from the unfair competition of products from regions with lower environmental constraints.

**Introduction of incentive-based public policies:** New, more ambitious and binding European regulations on pesticides are needed to speed up the transition to IPM. The introduction of a tax on pesticides, the revenue from which could fund the transition to agroecology, is something to explore.

To summarise, the widespread adoption of IPM requires a profound change in farming practices and economic models. This change will not be possible without strong political will, the commitment of all the players in the food chain and greater consideration for the expectations of the public.

