



Planned activities within and across the six agricultural sectors

Deliverable D2.3



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An EU-wide farm network demonstrating and promoting cost-effective IPM strategies

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Planned activities within and across the six agricultural sectors

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A bstract

The IPMWORKS project aims at building a European network of farms that are engaged in supporting farmers find and promote farm specific IPM strategies, within 12 EU Member States (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and The Netherlands) and 2 associated countries (Serbia and the United Kingdom), along with the existing national networks (“LEAF” in the UK, “GROEN-AoZ” in the Netherlands, “PestiRed” in Switzerland, “DIPS” in Germany and “DEPHY” in France). To build this European network, IPMWORKS is built on “hubs”, groups gathering 10 to 15 farmers within the same agricultural sector, facilitated by a hub coach. These hubs aim at facilitating peer-to-peer learning between farmers in order to support them in the adoption of farm specific IPM strategies, and contribute through demonstration events to communication on these strategies. These hubs cover different agricultural sectors. In order to tackle sector specific issues within the project and to support hub coaches in each agricultural sector, the IPMWORKS network is organized in agricultural sectors. Sector leaders play a key role to create links between hub coaches of the same sector, as well as connecting with WPs and task leaders regarding adapting material, training, guidelines and communication within the sector.

Throughout the first 16 months of the project, and due to the covid-19 situation, the setting of hubs has been delayed for some partners (see Deliverable 2.1). Throughout this period, sector leaders have played an important role in supporting hub coaches in understanding the goals of the project, including the interest of including organic farmers within hubs. Working with different tasks, they have helped adapt material to the sector (IPM Awareness, IPM Adoption, and self-assessment of IPM efficiency - sector Arable fields).

Although all hubs have been created by January 2022, each hub is in a different stage of their work. When some have just officially launched their hub and started working with each farmer on their individual goals, others have already started identifying their common working topics. The identification within each sector of working topics, across borders and hubs, will take place in the beginning of the year 2022. This will enable sector leaders to identify focuses, inputs to be brought to hub coaches, activities (cross visits, focus groups, targeted seminars, symposiums) that would benefit to the hubs.

Through regular exchanges with hub coaches, sectors leaders have set a work organization within their sector to support hub coaches and reach the objectives of the project. Most sectors have convened of regular meetings, as well as taking advantage of particular events to exchange within the sector (ie : Vineyard sector meeting programmed on the 14 March 2022) or promote the work done within sectors (i.e. organisation of an outdoor vegetable demonstration event during a joint European project meeting). The organic cross sector has defined, after harvesting expectations of hub coaches, to focus on specific topics raised by hub coaches, where inputs from the organic sector would broaden the available IPM strategies. Supporting the specific production sector leader, the organic sector is therefore working in close collaboration with each sector, and associated to sector meetings.

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1. Introduction

IPMWORKS aims at establishing a large EU-wide network of farmers and advisors to demonstrate that IPM ‘works’, when IPM-based strategies are designed at farm level with a holistic approach. In order to create this network, IPMWORKS wishes to link farmer groups – “hubs” – that have been created within 12 EU Member States (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and The Netherlands) and 2 associated countries (Serbia and the United Kingdom), and with 5 existing national networks gathering farmers engaged in adopting IPM strategies (“LEAF” in the UK, “GROEN-AoZ” in the Netherlands, “PestiRed” in Switzerland, “DIPS” in Germany and “DEPHY” in France).

Within each agricultural sector, sector leaders are responsible for making the sector work as one network across country borders. They are therefore key contact points:

- For IPMWORKS WP and task leaders in order to translate the different production/tools produced within the project to the sector as well as identify and help disseminate results, identify success stories
- For hub coaches in order to facilitate within sectors exchanges between hub coaches on IPM strategies within the sector, work on sector specific topics and support hub coaches in communicating on their hub.

Sector leaders are responsible for identifying and help disseminate results, and outputs for their sector: e.g. leaflets and practice abstracts about the main cost-effective IPM strategies in their sector. They also coordinate the production of leaflets and practice abstracts to be produced by hub coaches (See Milestone 2.2 regarding the role of sector leaders).

Sector leaders have worked during the first 16 months of the project to strengthen the links and clarify the objectives of the project with hub coaches, as well as support them in launching their hub. Sectors leaders have now set with hub coaches how the work will be organized within their sector.

2. Activities organized within and across sectors

During these first 16 months of the project, sector leaders have played a major role in supporting hub coaches in understanding the objectives of the project. Sector meetings have been times to relay important information regarding the project to hub coaches, taking advantage of smaller discussion groups to answer questions and discuss on ongoing activities of the project and the hubs.

Sector leaders have been the contact people for hub coaches with which to discuss the “Guidelines for a farm hub creation and management”, efficient means to show farmers the interest of joining the project, as well as the importance of including organic farmers within the hubs. In order to answer this question, the organic sector has organized a meeting to show hub coaches the measures that could be brought by organic production.

Sector leaders have also been a support to hub coaches regarding the survey campaign with farm hub members on IPM Awareness, IPM Adoption, and self-assessment of IPM efficiency. This survey was first designed for the sector Arable fields, and thereafter revised by each sector leader to adapt it to the specificities of the sector. Once finalized, sector leaders have answered hub coaches concerns and questions when they arose.

Regular online sector meetings have been key to maintaining a link between hub coaches and sector leaders. While small sectors (Greenhouse and Orchard) chose to have regular informal contact in these first stages of the project, other sectors have organized formal online meetings.

The **greenhouse sector** has organized one formal meeting (22 June 2021), to allow other partners involved in different WPs to be present and share with hub coaches.

The **orchard sector** has arranged a formal meeting on 7 October 2021, to discuss the main difficulties in setting up the different hubs, and to arrange a plan for demo events. The meeting was also useful to arrange the parallel session for the Annual meeting. The Orchard hub invited a policy maker from Emilia-Romagna, an Orchard vacated Italian Region (Carlo Malavolta), to tell the effort made by the Regional institution to support the IPM and which were the main limits, Gianluca Bovoli – President of a local organization of Olive grower, while from Slovenia, Biserka Donik Purgaj explained which are the main challenges apple growers are facing from an IPM perspective.

The **arable crop sector** has organized two meetings. A first meeting took place on Wednesday 5 May 2021 (together with StCom - #2), where the main topics discussed were:

- activities and deadlines faced by hub coaches,
- clarification of the sector leader’s role,
- important deadlines, potential change of the deadline for strategic demonstration plan,
- creating a sector’s mailing list,
- Hub coaches communication through WP2,
- Introduction of the Survey on IPM Adoption and Pest control,
- and lastly a short report from all partners on the situation in each hub.

The 2nd meeting was held on Wednesday 14 September 2021, where the H2020 RustWatch¹ project was presented by Fabio Mascher from Agroscope as a possible collaboration option for hubs in the arable sector to monitor the genetics of different Rust types and strains on cereals in Europe. As done during the first meeting, an update by each hub coach was made on the

¹ *RustWatch: A European early-warning system for wheat rust diseases*, H2020 GA N°773311, <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/773311/fr>

current status within each hub: progression of the hub setting, recruitment of farmers and number of organic farmers within the hub.

The vineyard sector and the outdoor vegetable and horticulture sector have organized meetings on a more regular basis during the year.

The **vineyard sector** invited a French hub coach from the DEPHY network to present her group, topics, activities and group dynamic. This gave the opportunity to exchange on specific topics such as functional biodiversity in vineyards and how to bring this topic to farmers.

The **outdoor vegetable sector** invited professor Rosemary Collier from Warwick University to give a presentation on IPM in vegetables in the parallel session of the Annual Meeting of October 14, 2021 (presentation available on the IPMWORKS SharePoint). Meetings enabled sector leaders to follow the progress of the hub setting and informing hub coaches of the news regarding the project.

The **organic cross sector** has worked during this first year to define the way the sector would be able to work with hub coaches. Due to its transversal mission, the organic sector has exchanged with hub coaches on two occasions in order to draft a working program. Joining task 2.2: “Launching, facilitating and operating new hubs of IPM Demo Farms”, the organic sector leader has introduced to hub coaches some organic IPM strategies during a meeting organized by task 2.2, illustrating the benefits of including organic farmers within the hubs to broaden the available measures for plant protection. A specific organic sector meeting was organized to harvest the expectations of hub coaches regarding the support the organic sector could bring to them. Following this meeting and answers collected from hub coaches, a specific work organization was built by the organic sector.

Using the internal tool set up by the IPMWORKS project (IPMWORKS SharePoint), a location is available for each sector where documents can be uploaded and shared among participants of the sector. This has been used by some sectors to summarize sector online meetings.

All IPMWORKS hub have been launched by January 2022. While some hubs have been able to start working with farmers on specific topics that would gather and engage them in the hub, some groups are in the process of identifying working topics within their hub. Therefore, following the work that was led in each sector to support hub setting and management, the sector activities will progressively shift to supporting hubs on specific topics and issues faced in the hubs, including on the organization of project events (demonstration events, cross visits, sector meetings).

3. Planned activities within and across sectors

Within all sectors, the interactions between hub coaches has been defined as follows.

Within the **Greenhouse** and **Orchard sectors**, as these sectors group few hub coaches, bilateral exchanges will be privileged depending on the IPMWORKS and hub agendas.

The **outdoor vegetables and horticulture sector** has defined to organize regular meetings with hub coaches, every 2 months.

Within the **vineyard sector**, meetings will also be organized every two months in order to discuss “hot” topics of the moment (IPMWORKS requirement, disease situation, group management...). Adding to these online meetings, the vineyard sector wishes to organize once a year a whole day in-person meetings, to allow field visits, testimonies, in-deep exchanges on technical topics and conviviality. The first one is planned in March 2022, in Toulouse (France), prior to the capacity building event.

The **arable crop sector** has defined to meet 3 times a year. Adding to these general sector meetings, the arable crop sector leader will be working in beginning of 2022 in drafting focus groups using the identified topics that each hub wishes to work with the farmers, in order to support hub coaches. This identification of common topics across hubs will be done during the month of February 2022, using the feedback of hub topics listed by hub coaches within an internal IPMWORKS (the hub journal). Within this tool, hub coaches are invited to consign the work undergone (hub presentation, hub meeting, demonstration event planning and reporting, self-assessment of the hub) that will be useful to follow the progress of each hub by the hub coach and project partners.

The identification of shared topics across hubs has already started in other sectors. This will help to build a work plan to enhance peer-to-peer learning among hub coaches, as well as hubs. These exchanges can be organized in the format of cross visits (task 2.5).

The **organic cross sector**, after gathering expectations from hub coaches on the support this sector could bring, has decided to work in close collaboration with production sector leaders, to support hub coaches when a specific topic is raised within the sector where organic production could bring new perspectives, as well as to present specific organic IPM strategies when necessary. Identification of possible focuses will be helped by the invitation of the organic sector leader during other sector meetings. The organic sector will start this collaboration with the orchard sector on the olive production. The aim is to build exchanges with groups outside of the IPMWORKS network, due to the limited size of the orchard sector within the project. Within the other sectors, topics have been identified that could lead to specific collaboration between the organic and production sectors:

- **Vineyard and Orchard**: the reduction of copper use.
- **Outdoor vegetables and horticulture**: organic IPM strategies to fight pest in the context of a reduction of authorized pesticides (i.e. control of cabbage fly).



- **Arable crops:** illustrating the interest and possible cross learning in a mixed convention-organic farmers group; the use of small production (such as legumes) for crop diversification within organic systems and the associated IPM strategies.
- **Greenhouse sector:** the collaboration between organic and conventional farming is fully operational, with a large number of common topics that are shared (i.e. companion crops, crop biodiversity...), which does not require immediate inputs from the organic sector.
- Collaboration with another H2020 project BIOFRUITNET² is envisaged: the orchard sector leader has been invited to take part in the online seminar on the topic of pests and disease to be held in March 2022.

Complementary to these activities, sectors will take part in, or organize, a number of events within IPMWORKS. The Capacity building event led by task 2.4, programmed in March 2022 and gathering all hub coaches defined a half day focus for hub coaches to exchange per sector on the IPM strategies that are worked within hubs.

Previous to this event, the vineyard sector is organizing its first whole day meeting, where hub coaches are incited to visit the French Vine and Wine Institute experimental station of Lisle sur Tarn (France), to visit the vineyard, participate to a robot demonstration, discuss on soil management, cover crops topics, as well as exchange on hub management.

Finally, the outdoor vegetable and horticulture sector has been invited to organize during a joint European project meeting (NEFERTITI³, IPM Decisions⁴, IPMWORKS) a demonstration event of IPM strategies within this sector, in order to illustrate to decision makers the important of peer-to-peer exchanges in promoting IPM strategies.

A number of tools have also been created within the IPMWORKS project to facilitate communication towards hub coaches, to inform hub coaches of activities taking place within the project, as well as the project timeline. These tools (IPMWORKS SharePoint, Hub coach IPMWORKS internal newsletter launched in December 2021) will be used within and across sectors in order to highlight project dynamics and activities to feed the network.

Further events will be identified by sector leaders during the project to support hub coaches and farmers in the existing farm specific IPM strategies within sectors, to support the process of demonstration events and cross visit organization, and to promote interesting IPM measures used within the IPMWORKS network.

² *BIOFRUITNET: Boosting Innovation in Organic FRUIT production through strong knowledge NETWORKs*, H2020 GA N° 862850, <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/862850>

³ An H2020 FarmDemo Project. *NEFERTITI: Networking European Farms to Enhance Cross Fertilisation and Innovation Uptake through Demonstration*, H2020 GA N°772705, <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/772705>

⁴ IPMWORKS sister project funded under the same topic. *IPM Decisions: Stepping-up IPM decision support for crop protection*, H2020 GA N°817617, <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/817617>

4. Conclusions

IPMWORKS has wished to divide the farmer network between 6 sectors, including an organic cross sector. The ambition of these sectors is to be able to support hub coaches, in charge of facilitating the farmer's groups, in understanding the project ambitions, adapting material to each sector and promote peer-to-peer learning among hub coaches. The first 16 months of the project have seen the launch of all hubs. Sector leaders have played a major role to support the setting of these hubs. The aims of the sector activities will be to maintain the support to hub coaches and feed the exchanges within each sector on hub management, and enlarging exchanges to enable discussion on shared topics within hubs. The organic cross sector will be working in close collaboration with other production sectors in order to answer any specific organic inputs, starting with the orchard sector. Several events will take place in 2022 to enable hub coaches within a sector to meet and/or promote the work done within a sector.