



First evaluation report on
Interaction with Networks and
stakeholders

Deliverable 7.2



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

Coordination and Support Action (CSA)

01 October 2020 – 30 September 2024 (48 months)

Deliverable 7.2

First evaluation report on Interaction with Networks and stakeholders

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1. IPMWORKS: Summary

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. 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 an EU-wide demonstration 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 launch new hubs of farms in regions or sectors where IPM pioneers are 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 organizing local demonstration activities. IPMWORKS stimulates access to the ‘IPM Decisions’ platform and provide 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 is organising training, and produced 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 also produces 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

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. Deliverable 7.2 summarizes 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 delay 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 COGECAS) as well as Research and Innovation actors and networks (EIP-AGRI Support Unit, SCAR-AKIS SWG, EUFRAS). The following sections describe the interactions, joint activities and decision taken with the above mentioned stakeholders.

During the last phase of the project, WP7 will continue interactions with these stakeholders but will also focus on stakeholders of the Agri-food chain (such as European Fruit and Vegetables Trade Association, FoodDrinkEurope, EuropeanFood Information Council, PAN Europe, and IOBC) to promote IPMWORKS results and IPM-sourced produces in novel market chains likely to provide both trade opportunities and added value for farmers.

3. Relationships with the EIP-AGRI

EIP-AGRI Support Facility¹ is the cornerstone of the European Innovation Partnership on Productive and Sustainable Agriculture² Policy as this unit is dedicated to incentivising and accelerate networking, animation and communication on all activities related to the EIP-AGRI. From the launching of the new CAP (January 2023), the EIP-AGRI Support Facility has been integrated to the new **EU CAP Network**. The Network is a forum through which National CAP Networks, organisations, administrations, researchers, entrepreneurs and practitioners can share knowledge and information (e.g. via peer-to-peer learning and good practices) about agriculture and rural policy. The European Commission set up the EU CAP Network in line with the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council to support CAP strategic plans (CSPs)³. The Network supports the design and implementation of CAP strategic plans, innovation and knowledge exchange, including EIP-AGRI, and evaluation and monitoring of the CAP.

In order to accelerate the **communication and outreach of the project** across the European R&I community, it is mandatory and paramount to establish early connections with the EIP-AGRI Support Facility. Consequently, WP7 systematically reported the most important information about the project, the project

¹ https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/support/innovation-knowledge-exchange-eip-agri_en

² <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/about.html>

³ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/cap-my-country/cap-strategic-plans_en

events and main activities to the EIP-AGRI Support Facility, thus enabling many European Stakeholders to be aware of IPMWORKS projects, events and results.

EIP-AGRI Support Facility has been contacted and updated about the objectives of the IPMWORKS project, in order to connect any EU and EIP-AGRI related initiatives (such as OGs) dealing with IPM or on-farm demonstration challenge.

Several articles describing the IPMWORKS project have been published on the general section of the EIP-AGRI website, in the dedicated section on EU projects dealing with IPM, as well as on the dedicated section dedicated to Demonstration networks:

- <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/news/demo-farms-pesticide-reduction-0/>
- <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/news/demonstrating-ipm-works>
- <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/tags/integrated-pest-management-ipm>
- <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/tags/demonstration-farm>

NB: Unfortunately, since the launching of the EU CAP Network in 2023, the EIP-AGRI Support Facility website migrated to the EU CAP Network website. Consequently, the maintenance of the initial EIP-AGRI Support Facility website is not ensured anymore and the project WP7 team realises that most of the links mentioned above are not active anymore and redirect the user to the “home” webpage.

On the other hand, beyond the relationships related to the digital communication of IPMWORKS, other **physical meetings and interactions** between the EIP-AGRI Support Facility and IPMWORKS occurred in the first part of the project implementation.

1. A representative of the EIP-AGRI Support Facility has been invited to participate actively to two IPMWORKS events that have been held in Belgium in May 2022 in the framework of the **2nd Farm Demo Conference** (<https://ipmworks.net/2022/06/28/farm-demo-policy-dialogue-conference-2022/>)
 - The representative of the EIP-AGRI actively participated to the **field visit/policy day-dialogue** in a farm near Brussels in order to participate to the debate on Demo farms and IPM and to communicate around the exchanges on the EIP-AGRI communication channels. (<https://nefertiti-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Report-Meeting-with-Policy-Makers-project-Nefertiti-IPM-works-IPM-decisions-before-FarmDemo-Conference-2022-05-10-draft-2022-06-24.pdf>)
 - The following day, the EIP-AGRI support Unit held a boot during the 2nd Farm Demo Conference in Brussels to incentivise networking between IPMWORKS and the EIP-AGRI related projects (including EIP-Operational groups) in the field of demonstration and IPM. (<https://nefertiti-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Report-Farm-Demo-Conference-projects-Nefertiti-IPM-works-IPM-decisions-2022-05-11-draft-2022-06-27.pdf>)
2. Several IPMWORKS partners (9 partners from 5 countries including the project coordinator – see Annex 1) participated to the **EU CAP Network workshop** ‘Innovative arable crop protection – using pesticides sustainably’. The IPMWORKS partners had the opportunity to share both, their scientific and technical experience about IPM implementation as well as their experience on demonstrating IPM on-farm and the added-value of demonstration networks for peer-to-peer learning and innovation uptake. In addition, IPMWORKS partners promoted the idea of extending the IPM demo-farm network by welcoming new hubs, including in regions/countries where IPMWORKS is not present yet; a number of people have expressed an interest in setting up a Demonstration group in their region (Belgium, Serbia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Austria, Greece).

https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/events/eu-cap-network-workshop-innovative-arable-crop-protection-using-pesticides-sustainably_en

3. IPMWORKS National focal Points – NFPs (Task7.1) have the responsibility to establish relationships 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 activities is to create synergies of dissemination/communication activities (WP6) and to encourage policymakers to join a “European Network of Policy Makers for IPM”. The aim of the network will be to share technical IPM information in a user-friendly format with policy-makers and to seek for solutions for the IPMWORKS sustainability beyond the timespan of the project. In addition, several National Focal Points established some relationships with the **National CAP Network**, in order to raise awareness about IPMWORKS networks in their own countries, connect IPMWORKS national/regional demonstration networks with other actors, stakeholders and projects (including EIP OGs) but also to disseminate the findings of the project. The late and heterogeneous start/launching of the National CAP networks (from 2023 onwards) across the EU countries doesn’t allow to have a clear picture on the level of interaction between the NFPs and the National CAP Networks. Moreover, the starting of the project during the COVID period generated some initial delay in the implementation of Task 7.1 and the policy dialogue at national scale. Nevertheless, the last phase of the project and the operational of the National CAP networks across Europe will enable IPMWORKS NFPs to strengthen the interaction with the National CAP networks stakeholders’ ecosystems.
4. The EU CAP Network decided in 2021 to launch **European Cross-Visits** as a key and regular activity to network actors and stakeholders across Europe in order to increase knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning on specific thematic areas. The IPMWORKS T7.2 Leader (ACTA) has been contacted by the EU CAP Network representatives in order to exchange on IPMWORKS methodology (also partially inspired by Agrispin and NEFERTITI Horizon 2020 projects) to organise European/cross-border visits. This exchange resulted in the setting of Cross Visit as recurring (quarterly or bi-annual) activity of the EU CAP Network. An example of EU CAP Network cross-visit can be found hereafter: https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-cap-network-cross-visits-call-expression-interest-now-open_en

Despite a late start of the operational activities caused by the pandemic, a wide range of interactions have been initiated with the EIP-AGRI and the CAP Networks in the first phase of the project. Some activities will be extended over the time (Communication and dissemination, participation to relevant IPM and demonstration oriented EIP-AGRI/CAP Network events, invitation of EIP-AGRI representatives to EU scale IPMWORKS events and workshops) and till the end of the project, whereas other activities will be strengthened in the last phase of the project (Interaction with National CAP Networks ecosystems). All these actions will participate to connect all relevant stakeholders (at EU and National Levels) to IPMWORKS activities as well as disseminating IPMWORKS outcomes and results, with the view to sustain IPMWORKS networks after the project end.

4. Relationships with SCAR AKIS

The project coordinator presented the IPMWORKS project during the SWG SCAR AKIS meeting that took place on 16 November 2022 online. This meeting was the opportunity to present the organisation of the project as well as the first achievements and cooperation with NEFERTITI and IPM Decisions projects.

The main topics of discussions between IPMWORKS and the SCAR AKIS SWG were the following:

- a) Increased importance of a true multi-actor approach for Horizon Europe projects;
- b) Need for coordination of competing digital platforms on IPM: (i) IPM Resource Toolbox; (ii) the

FarmBook; (iii) IPM-pilot project platform coordinated by ARCADIA;

- c) Potential contribution of the IPMWORKS network: evaluation of the impacts of the Ukrainian crisis on the level of adoption of IPM, rotations and crop rotation, the level of input intensification;
- d) Prospects of articulation between IPMWORKS and the CAP Networks, the EIP-Agri Operational Groups, and the national demonstration networks developed in the framework of the future CAP.

The conclusions of the exchanges with the SCAR AKIS SWG will allow IPMWORKS to better steer its activities for the remaining time of the project. Another meeting/exchange with the SCAR AKIS SWG will be scheduled before the end of the project to further work on the action points mentioned above, including the sustainability of the IPMWORKS demonstration network on the long-term.

5. Relationships with EUFRAS

The dialogue with *EUFRAS – The European Forum for Rural Advisory Services* follows different ways of cooperation.

First of all, it is important to mention that 7 partners of the IPMWORKS are also members of EUFRAS (including the organisation of the EUFRAS chairman: PROAGRIA – Finland). As IPMWORKS resolutely follows a multi-actor-approach, it is paramount to onboard partners that have the capacity to manage on-farm demonstration networks in the different Member States, also with regards to the specificities of the national AKIS. Advisory Services members of EUFRAS represent 22% of the project partners and are involved on a daily basis in the implementation and monitoring of the project activities.

Second of all, the EUFRAS contact point (Michael Kuegler) attended the **field visit / policy-dialogue day** in the farm near Brussels (May 2022) and actively participated to the debate with farmers, projects partners, policy makers and other stakeholders on the importance of Demo farms networks to increase the capacities of European farmers to adopt IPM practices. The vision of European advisors through the EUFRAS contact point was really essential for the focus and the quality of the debate. Indeed, as underlined by the DG AGRI guidelines for the establishment of the CAP National Strategic Plans in the 27 members states, but also in the last SCAR SWG AKIS Report⁴, advisory services must play a crucial role in the exchange and diffusion of knowledge between actors and towards farmers, so to accelerate innovation uptake. (<https://nefertiti-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Report-Meeting-with-Policy-Makers-project-Nefertiti-IPM-works-IPM-decisions-before-FarmDemo-Conference-2022-05-10-draft-2022-06-24.pdf>)

On the other hand, a dedicated session on **“the role of advisory services “** in EU demo farm networks was organised during the **2nd Farm Demo Conference in Brussels**. A EUFRAS representative (Anton Jagodic – Head of the Slovenian Chambers of Agriculture) was invited as speaker to share EUFRAS view and perspectives on the role of European advisors sharing relevant knowledge for Pesticide Reduction Use across the farming community in Europe. He had the opportunity to underline again the importance of the demo networks to share knowledge in the farming community, but also to connect European networks such as IPMWORKS with other national or regional demonstration if we collectively want to reach the expected impact sought by the R&I community.

Last, EUFRAS is already engaged in the project reflection about **long-term sustainability of the network** (in relation with task 7.2). From the NEFERTITI project experience, we learned that the sustainability of such demonstration networks lies in the capacity of the local (national and regional) actors and organisations to create ownership and a real added value from the project activities, so it can become recurrent and long-

⁴ Preparing for future AKIS in Europe (p 81 – p112): <https://scar-europe.org/index.php/akis-documents>

time running in the different EU territories. EUFRAS is identified as a key actor to enable and incentivise National Advisory Services to run demo-networks on the long term, through and efficient use of the CAP Advisory measures.

6. Relationships with COPA-COGECA and CEJA

The dialogue with European Farmers Organisations is crucial to ensure that the project activities are in line with farmers' expectations and enable their long-term commitment, but also to further spread the project message related to the fact that Integrated Pest Management indeed works and that farm networks are active across Europe to transfer technical knowledge to the farming community.

The dialogue with the farmers' organisation has been pursued along the relationship with the 2 main Farmers based organisation represented at the European level: COPA COGECA (the organisation of European farmers unions and cooperatives and CEJA (The European Young farmers association).

The coordinator of the Working party on R&I at Copa Cogeca (Branwen Miles) attended the field visit / policy-dialogue day in the farm near Brussels (May 2022) and participated to the debate on Demo farms and IPM to express the voice of the European farmers and the necessity to further embed such initiatives in the existing farmers networks and unions. She also participated in the several workshops that have been held during the 2nd Farm Demo Conference. The relationship and the dialogue with the coordinator of the Working party on R&I at Copa Cogeca was continued during the Synergy Days 2023⁵ in Thessaloniki-Greece. The Task Leader of T7.2 (ACTA) had the opportunity to further exchange with Branwen Miles on the perspective of relationship between IPMWORKS and COPA-COGECA. The European Farmer organisation is interested in participating to the upcoming IPMWORKS events and to play a role in the long-term demo-networks sustainability.

The Vice-president of CEJA (Anne-Catherine Dalcq – Belgian farmer) was invited to the field visit / policy-dialogue day in the farm near Brussels. She was interviewed for the video report of the event⁶.

Anne-Catherine Dalcq was also invited for the 2nd Farm Demo Conference as the "external witness". She concluded both events (field visit / policy-dialogue day and the 2nd Farm Demo Conference) with a dedicated and inspiring speech to express farmers' vision. 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.

⁵ <https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/synergy-days>

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3DhEU9VOp0>

7. Relationships with other European on-farm demo projects

To increase the outreach and the impact of European projects like IPMWORKS, it is paramount to connect it with similar/sisters project funded under the European Framework Research and Innovation programs (Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe). Beyond the day-to-day close relationship with the **IPM Decisions** project (as sister project addressing a different scope of the same call) from the beginning of the project, strong relationships were initiated during the setting-up and then the first implementation phase with the **NEFERTITI⁷ project**, until its termination in September 2023. As an example of the synergies with NEFERTITI, one can underline the following concrete actions: similar network's structure and networking methodology (i.e. Cross Visits), use of the same platform for registering, reporting and monitoring the on-farm demo events, similar communication and dissemination channels, organisation of a joint Conference (2nd Farm Demo Conference) etc.

Since the termination of NEFERTITI, two major new on-farm demo projects have been funded through the Horizon Europe Program: **Climate Farm Demo⁸** and **Climate Farm Advisor⁹**. The aim of these two projects is to create an EU-wide network of 1500 Pilot demo farms to demonstrate Climate Smart solutions to farmers and to empower European advisory services in their capacity to provide tailored and robust Climate smart advice, including through demonstration. Several thematic areas covered by these two projects have been identified as thematic areas where IPMWORKS will provide substantial inputs and where the two “young” projects will benefit from IPMWORKS experiences (Grassland management, Forage production, Crops management, Soil health and Biodiversity, Water management). The two projects will be connected to IPMWORKS during the last year of the project to further connect the actors and stakeholders and learn from each other to increase synergies and efficiency.

8. Prospects

So far, the relationship with the stakeholders have been concentrated on purpose on the primary production and Research and Innovation actors as first priority target of cooperation. Nevertheless, another target will be strongly contacted in the last year of the project, namely the stakeholders of the agri-food chain. Indeed these actors representing the value chain and main economics players have also an important role in the capacity of the farming sector to further shift to IPM and environmentally friendly practices. However, as these actors need clear evidence of the scientific and concrete results of any project in order to engage in

⁷ <https://nefertiti-h2020.eu>

⁸ <https://climatefarmdemo.eu>

⁹ <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101084179>

operational partnership, the decision has been taken to initiate relationships and exchanges with them, only once the project will have produced substantial results that can be presented.

Moreover, the activities foreseen for the last year are the following:

1. **Organising a workshop with the actors of the agri-food chain** (during the winter 2023/2024) with the following objectives:
 - Reminder of the context, i.e. "societal expectations concerning the reduction in the use of plant protection products", and the objectives of the project
 - Presentation of 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).
 - Presentation of the chosen method: setting up networks with a common methodology to identify priority issues (which may arise from downstream requests) and co-construct solutions.
 - Consideration of 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 testimonial from 1 sector leader and 1 hub coach.
 - Present the approach adopted to set up the networks: training of Hub Coaches 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 two workshops will be followed by a more general dialogue with all relevant stakeholders invited during the **IPM CONFERENCE 2024**, jointly organised by IPMWORKS and IPM Decisions on 14 May 2023, in Brussels.

9. Deviations or delays

9.1. Description of and reason for deviations or delays

Deliverable 7.2 was expected to be delivered in M24 of the project (September 2022). However, due to the COVID crisis and the difficulties to organise meetings during the first two years, the Deliverable has been postponed to M28 (January 2023). This initial postponement of the Deliverable have been approved by the EC and the REA during the first review meeting of the project (RP1). Nevertheless, considering the initial delay accumulated because of the COVID and the capacity to organise another batch of interesting exchanges and meetings in 2023, the Task 7.2 Leader (ACTA) postponed the Deliverable to M37 (October 2023).

9.2. Impact on other tasks

The postponement of activities (and delivering D7.2) related to the networking with the EU Agriculture stakeholders had no major impact on other tasks. Indeed, the project has established relationships with the targeted stakeholders that will allow to timely achieve the task activities and results by the end of the project. Consequently, no corrective measures are necessary

10. ANNEXES

List of IPMWORKS partners who participated to the EU CAP Network workshop 'Innovative arable crop protection - using pesticides sustainably'.

- Nicolas Munier-Jolain (INRAE, FR – Project Coordinator)
- Harm Brinks (DELPHY, NL)
- Per Kudsk (AU, DK)
- Giovanni Pecchioni (SSSA, IT)
- Stefano Carlesi (SSSA, IT)
- Calypso Picaud (CRAO, FR)
- Simon Lox (ILVO, BE)
- Marleen Riemens (WUR, NL)
- Geert Kessel (WUR, NL)