

Concept note - SUPPORT

Length of project: 48 months

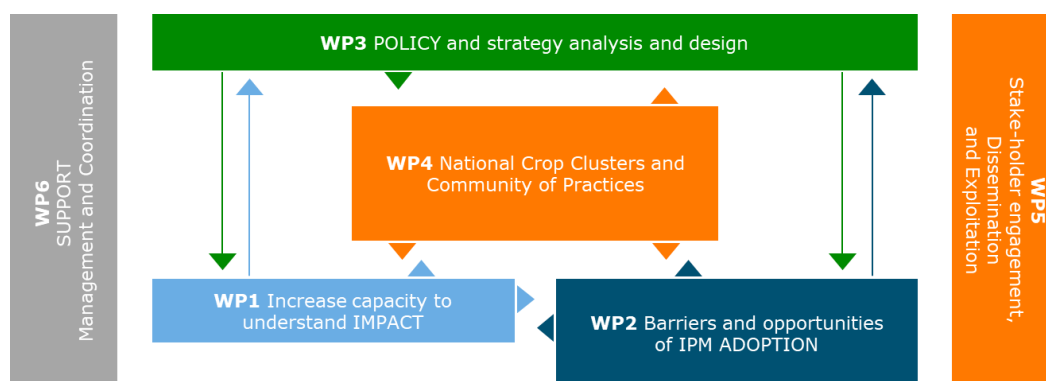
Project period: 01 January 2023 – 31 December 2026

Project coordinator: Stichting Wageningen Research (WUR), Netherlands

Consortium: 20 partners from 10 European countries (Denmark, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, Switzerland)

The project

SUPPORT is a joint initiative of **20 organisations** from 10 different countries, including academia and higher education, SMEs, farmer cooperative organisations and public bodies. The project is funded under the Horizon Europe Research and Innovation programme for a period of four years (January 2023-December 2026). With the main objective to pave the way for adoption of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) tools and technologies, the SUPPORT project will develop relevant and actionable knowledge to be used in co-creation design with actors of public policies and private sector strategies. Through a project organisation of six different **work packages** and with a **consortium** that contains all necessary expertise and experience, SUPPORT will investigate why the adoption of IPM tools and low pesticide input practices is lagging behind and what could be done to address this situation.



Uptake of IPM tools in agriculture

To prevent and eradicate harmful organisms and thus secure crop yields, plant protection products play an important role in agriculture and in managing food production. However, existing crop protection strategies rely to a large extent on the use of chemical pesticides which may carry hazardous substances that can imply risks for human health, biodiversity and the environment. Therefore, there is a widely felt need to reduce the use of pesticides and to reduce the dependency of agricultural producers on the use of chemical pesticides. Nevertheless, this must be achieved without reducing food production, farm economic profitability and the provision of other ecosystem services.

Well-designed integrated pest management programmes can play an important role to reduce the dependency on chemical pesticides. However, the uptake of IPM practices by farmers remains low today. We lack knowledge about the reasons why the gap between potential and realised uptake of IPM practices exists, and which pathways can bridge this gap.



The project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation programme under Grant Agreement No 101084527.

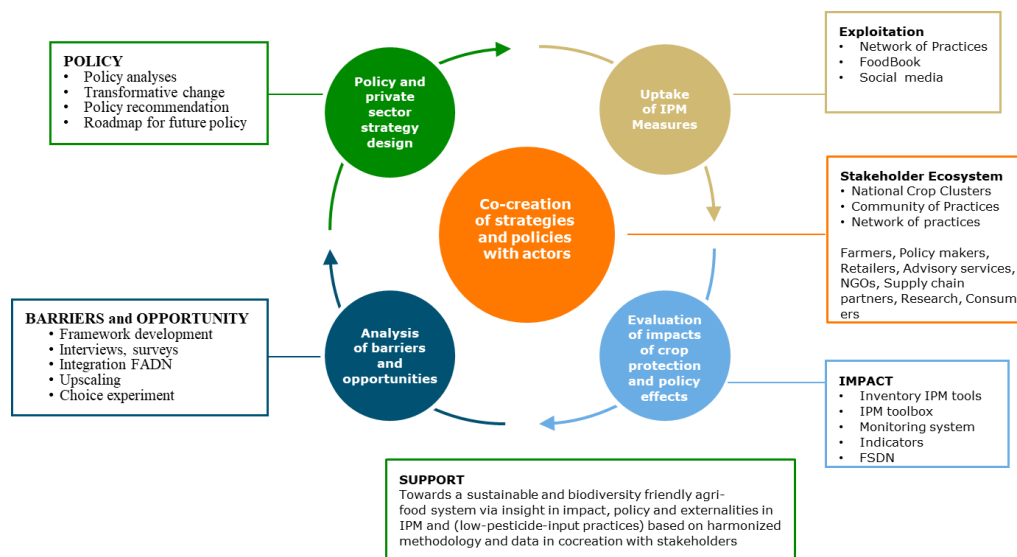
Objectives and activities

The **specific objectives** of the project are the following:

1. To build a **SUPPORT Stakeholder Ecosystem** to co-create strategies and policies with actors.
2. To create an **inventory of current and future IPM tools** and assessment of their impacts on pest control efficacy, economic performance of farms and the environment.
3. To **identify barriers and drivers** in the entire agri-food system for the adoption of IPM and to analyse their role in farmer decision-making.
4. To propose **public policies and private sector strategies** for enhancing the adoption of IPM tools and technologies in a co-creation process with the engagement of relevant actors.

The project will create solutions by building on an **RRI (Responsible Research and Innovation) approach**, in particular referring to the analysis of the drivers and barriers in the external environment, which need to be matched with the understanding of the reasons why farmers and growers decide to apply IPM, low-risk pesticide use practices or rely on chemical pesticide use. This matching process will enable:

- A basis for the development of **strategies** to enable and **support individual farmers** to apply IPM and to make their crop protection management more sustainable.
- A basis for the development of **strategies** and policies at the **level of systems, landscape and rural areas** to remove barriers, to create new opportunities and to enable farmer systems to adopt IPM and low-risk pesticide use practices at a larger scale.
- A basis for the **adjustment of crop protection policies** at Member State and EU level.



National Crop Clusters and Community of Practices

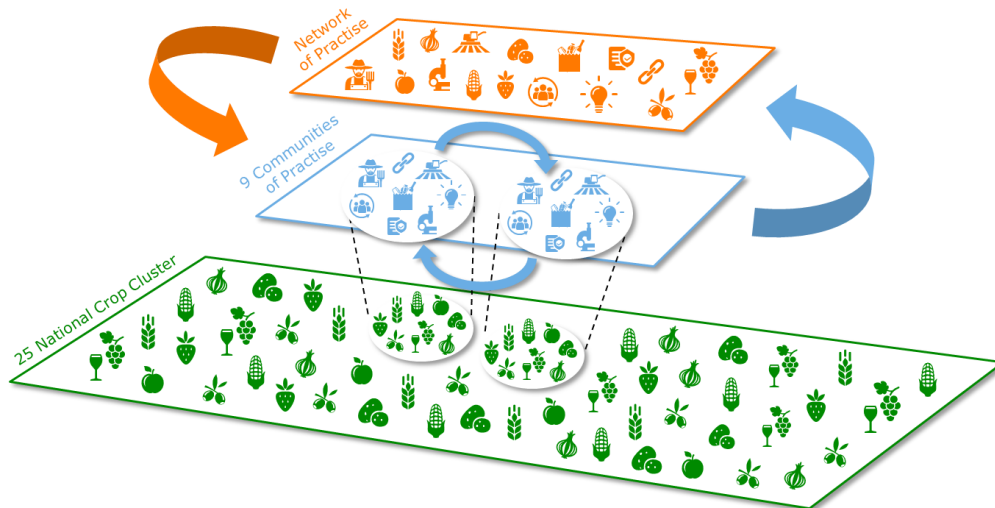
The development of the project activities takes place through the organisation of six work packages and in a co-creation process with stakeholders. A multi-actor approach will be the backbone of the research process as follows:

- **25 National Crop Clusters (NCCs)** will be used for data collection. NCCs are a selection of cases covering a wide range of farm typologies, sectors and systems representative of the diversity of farming in the EU and associated countries.











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- In 9 of those NCCs, **Community of Practices (CoPs)** will be developed with public and private stakeholders to co-create strategies and policies.
- The CoPs will be embedded in a **Network of Practice (NoP)**, an overarching platform connecting all stakeholders.
- The NoP will be used to communicate, discuss and disseminate results of the SUPPORT project with the entire community of stakeholders in the EU.



The NCCs include **wheat, maize, onion, potato, strawberry, apple, wine grape and olive**. These crops were selected for their empirical diversity and suitability in studying the IPM techniques, barriers and drivers in different food sectors, with vastly different production methods and unique sustainability challenges. In identifying the NCCs, a balance has been sought between annual vs. perennial crops; specialty products vs. commodities; and a broad geographical spread in different climatic zones.

Country	Bio-geographical region	Perennial		Annual cropping system					
		Processing industry 	Fresh 	Fresh 	Fresh 	Processing industry 	Processing industry 	Fresh 	Fresh 
Denmark	Atlantic					X	X	X	
France	Atlantic					X		X	
Germany	Atlantic					X		X	
Italy	Mediterranean		X	X					X
Netherlands	Atlantic			X	X			X	
Belgium	Atlantic				X			X	
Poland	Continental			X				X	X
Romania	Continental					X	X		
Spain	Mediterranean	X	X		X				
Switzerland	Alpine					X	X		
Greece	Mediterranean	X	X						

■ Mediterranean
 ■ Atlantic
 ■ Continental
 ■ Alpine
 X T4.3 Community of Practices 9
 X T4.2 National Crop Clusters 25



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