

# Supporting Uptake Integrated Pest Management and Low-Risk Pesticide Use



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SUPPORT aims to pave the way for adoption of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) tools and technologies by developing relevant and actionable scientific knowledge to be used in a co-creation design with actors of public policies and private sector strategies.

# The project

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

**Well-designed IPM programmes** can play an important role in this context, however, the uptake of IPM practices by farmers remains low. 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. 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.

## Goals and objectives

- 1 Build a **SUPPORT Stakeholder Ecosystem** to co-create strategies and policies with actors.
- 2 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 **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 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.



# Activities

The development of the project activities takes place in the framework of a co-creation process with stakeholders. A multi-actor approach will be the backbone of the research process including 25 **National Crop Clusters (NCCs)**. The 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. In nine of those NCCs, **Community of Practices (CoPs)** will be developed with public and private stakeholders to co-create strategies and policies. These CoPs will be embedded in a **Network of Practice (NoP)**, an overarching platform connecting all stakeholders.

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.



## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the SUPPORT project include:

- Better understanding of IPM strategies among relevant actors.
- Improved capacities for behavioural and experimental research among researchers.
- Implementation and use of IPM among farmers.
- Improved advisory services for support of IPM adoption.
- More food supply actors sourcing products that are produced with IPM.
- Increased awareness amongst consumers regarding IPM and consequences of pesticide use on health and environment.
- Better informed policy makers regarding project results enabling an improved design and implementation of policies.
- Reduction of overall use and risk of pesticides.
- Reduction of use of more hazardous pesticides.