



FACTSHEET

DELIVERABLE 3.1: POLICY ANALYSIS ON IPM ADOPTION AND POLICY GAPS



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POLICY ANALYSIS ON INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM) ADOPTION AND POLICY GAPS

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SUMMARY

The imperative to reduce reliance on chemical pesticides in agriculture, has led to the adoption of the Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) approach by the SUPPORT project. This initiative aims to understand the motivations behind farmers' pesticide use choices through meticulous analysis. Recent deliverables include a comprehensive analysis of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) adoption levels in selected EU Member States, revealing policy gaps such as variations in adoption and insufficient incentives for IPM practices. By aligning insights with strategies for promoting IPM adoption, SUPPORT seeks to facilitate sustainable crop protection management and develop tailored policy recommendations, promoting collaborative and evidence-based approaches to catalyse a shift towards more sustainable agricultural practices and ensure the resilience of food systems and environmental health.

This factsheet provides an overview of the findings resulting from qualitative interviews conducted with policymakers in a selection of EU Member States, as well as key results/conclusions and a section on next steps.



IN THE MEMBER STATES

Germany

Policymakers in Germany prioritise enhancing the implementation of IPM practices within agriculture, though they approach additional EU regulations with caution due to concerns about complexity and costs. Proactive measures involve providing farmers with support and digital tools for efficient crop protection, yet specific details on how the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and national strategies promote IPM and align with EU sustainability goals are lacking. Efforts are concentrated on improving farmers' knowledge through the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS), with a focus on unbiased advice and tailored policies to address regional challenges. Emphasis is placed on stakeholder engagement, research, and innovation to support IPM adoption, alongside consumer education on sustainable farming to meet the growing demand for pesticide-free products.

Italy

Policymakers in Italy push for clearer EU regulations to enhance IPM implementation and increase funding. Current measures include national guidelines and region-specific regulations, focusing on farmer training and alternative sustainable measures. Stakeholder collaboration is vital for driving IPM adoption, with emphasis on research and innovation. Policymakers are ready to support IPM projects and stress accurate record-keeping, highlighting the importance of collaboration at both domestic and international levels.

Belgium

Belgian policymakers in Flanders push for stricter EU regulations on IPM to ensure consistency across diverse agricultural systems. IPM is supported through the CAP Strategic Plan, with conditions for farmer funding. Balancing pesticide reduction with economic viability is crucial, with stakeholder engagement emphasizing public awareness. However, specific mechanisms for engagement and collaboration with other EU countries are not extensively discussed, while farmer training and exploring alternatives to chemicals remain key priorities.



IN THE MEMBER STATES

Poland

Polish policymakers recognize challenges with implementing IPM, citing issues with oversight, education, and farmer compliance. They seek EU support for farmer education and express uncertainty about enforcing new regulations, like digital pesticide records. Limited public awareness hampers IPM adoption, while funding scarcity and political differences pose further obstacles. Concerns persist about data accuracy and verification in digital record-keeping.

Romania

Policymakers in Romania acknowledge the need for better IPM implementation, particularly in regions with low adoption rates (e.g. in small farms). Initiatives include promoting integrated management, guidelines, and a pesticide tax. They align activities with CAP requirements and plan to launch a digital platform for recording treatments in 2026. Challenges include small farm prevalence, addressed with resistant plant varieties and low-risk products. Supply chain hurdles involve collaboration and awareness. While stakeholder engagement is prioritized, collaboration with other EU states on stakeholder-related IPM issues lacks detail.

Netherlands

Dutch farmers are divided in their preference for IPM methods, with greenhouse growers leaning towards non-chemical approaches. The Ministry of Agriculture aims to boost IPM adoption through ambitious goals in their National Action Plan, including developing tools for tracking crop protection. However, there is a contrast in views between advocating for specific IPM criteria at the Member State level and pushing for mandatory IPM guidelines by the Dutch Food Safety Authority. Collaboration with local authorities targets regional challenges, but supply chain hurdles persist despite eco-label popularity. Policymaking actively engages stakeholders through IPM training and research focused on reducing plant protection product use.



IN THE MEMBER STATES

Denmark

Policymakers in Denmark acknowledge challenges in implementing IPM and prioritize EU and national regulations to encourage adoption. Measures such as a pesticide tax, chemical prohibitions, and IPM assessment mandates support IPM implementation. Stakeholder engagement is a key focus in policy-making, emphasizing transparency and inclusion in NAP development. Research initiatives prioritize precision technologies and IPM innovation farms, supported through national pesticide action plans.

Spain

Spain prioritizes implementing clear EU criteria for IPM to reduce pesticide use, supported by legislative measures and tax policies. Proactive efforts include advisory services, farmer training, and tailored policies addressing specific challenges. Inclusive stakeholder engagement, collaboration among Member States, and consumer education are emphasized, alongside research and innovation to improve IPM adoption and address supply chain challenges.

Greece

In Greece, hurdles related to the adoption of IPM are attributed to resistance to change and reliance on traditional pesticide methods. To address this, efforts include providing detailed plant protection guidelines and enhancing stakeholder communication. Public demand for pesticide-free produce influences farming practices, but limited consumer awareness of IPM underscores the need for education campaigns. Although specific research findings were not outlined, Greece shows interest in innovative solutions to bolster IPM policies.



KEY FINDINGS

- Total sales of plant protection products (PPPs) in the EU increased by 2.7% in 2021, reaching 355,175 tonnes, indicating sustained demand.
- Spain, France, Germany, and Italy collectively accounted for 69% of pesticide sales in 2021, showcasing their significant influence on regional pesticide usage trends.
- Conversely, Poland, the Netherlands, Romania, Belgium, Greece, and Denmark represented 16% of pesticide sales, although their agricultural sectors still contribute to shaping regional pesticide consumption.
- Some EU countries, including Denmark, Italy, Romania, Belgium, and the Netherlands, experienced declines in pesticide sales since 2011, possibly due to sustainable farming practices and stricter regulations.
- However, Spain, Germany, and France saw slight increases in pesticide sales over the past decade, driven by factors like pest outbreaks and market demands.
- IPM adoption faces challenges across the EU, such as weak enforcement and limited practical alternatives, hindering consistent implementation at the farm level.
- The Sustainable Use Directive (SUD) has faced criticism for its limited effectiveness in promoting sustainable practices, indicating a need for stronger regulatory measures and incentives.
- Comprehensive strategies, including enhanced training programs and improved data collection, are necessary to address these challenges and align with broader EU sustainability objectives.
- Promoting technological innovations like precision farming and biological control agents can offer sustainable alternatives to traditional pesticide use, fostering a more resilient agricultural sector.

NEXT STEPS

The information of this work has set the ground for all work that will be done in the policy related aspects of the SUPPORT project. Based on these findings, policy recommendations and a “policy toolbox” will be created to educate all stakeholders about the current scenery of IPM in the EU, but also educate future policymakers about the needs of each stakeholder and mostly farmers in the agrifood sector.



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