

THE PURPEST PROJECT



NEWS

- PurPest kicks off 2026 with major momentum
- Active presence and engagement at IPM Essen
- New video, educational material, and PurPest-dedicated podcast episode
- From webinar to global phenomenon
- Best Poster award and more!



As PurPest enters its final year, we celebrate the journey from laboratory innovation to field-ready solutions for early pest detection. Over the past years, our campaigns across Europe have refined sensor technologies, captured pest-specific VOCs, and integrated AI-driven analysis, bringing us closer than ever to safeguarding crops, forests, and ecosystems. This year, we will focus on full deployment, pilot demonstrations, and turning our hard-earned insights into practical, real-world impact.



PurPest kicks off 2026 with major momentum!



On January 15, **Thomas Jung** participated in the [National Information Day on Life Sciences](#), organized by the Technology Centre Prague, in cooperation with the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague.

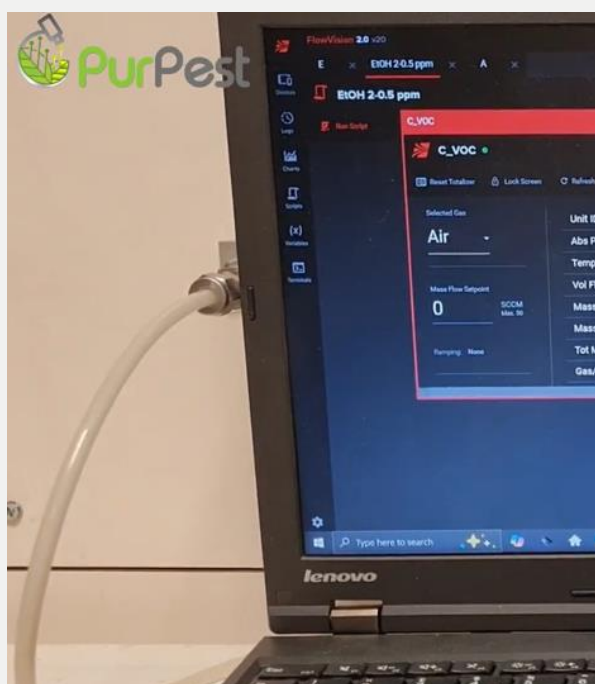
The event focused on new funding opportunities under Horizon Europe, with presentations covering Cluster 6 calls, bioeconomy, environmental missions, EIT Food, and the LIFE programme. During the event, Thomas Jung shared practical insights from the implementation of PurPest, highlighting experiences, challenges, and lessons learned from Horizon Europe collaboration.

The meeting brought together researchers, project coordinators, and European funding experts to discuss future opportunities in agricultural and environmental research.

New PurPest video

We released a new video from our partners at the University of Warwick, "[PurPest – VOC Detection Technology](#)", which presents an innovative approach to early pest detection with the potential to significantly improve plant health monitoring across agriculture and forestry.

The video demonstrates how VOC detection can support a new paradigm in pest monitoring, allowing for faster response times and more targeted interventions. This approach has the potential to reduce pesticide use, limit economic losses, and contribute to more sustainable and environmentally friendly agricultural practices.



IPM Essen 2026: innovation, engagement and launch of our interactive quiz!



From January 27–30, PurPest was proudly presented at [IPM Essen](#), the world's leading trade fair for plants.

Representing the project were **Andrea Ficke** and **Birgitte Henriksen** from NIBIO, **Daniel Wright** from SINTEF, **Ali Ghaddar** from Chromatotec, and **Martin Uthus** from Plante og importkontroll AS.

Throughout the entire exhibition, the project had its own dedicated stand, where we showcased presentations about PurPest and engaged with a wide range of stakeholders. A special highlight was the PurPest Quiz, created specifically for the event, which attracted great interest and sparked many valuable conversations among visitors.

Andrea Ficke delivered an excellent presentation about the project in the Innovation Hall. Focusing on the practical approach of PurPest, we showed the application potential of VOC detection within the nursery industry.

During the week, our stand welcomed a steady stream of visitors with diverse professional backgrounds – including producers, wholesalers, plant health inspectors, and researchers. The event provided an exceptional opportunity to exchange knowledge, discuss challenges in plant health, and explore potential collaborations.

This year, IPM Essen hosted more than 40,000 visitors and 1,500 exhibitors, offering an outstanding platform for networking and visibility. It was a fantastic experience to present PurPest on such an international stage.

We would like to sincerely thank everyone who visited our stand and showed interest in the project. We look forward to continuing the conversations and collaborations initiated during the fair.

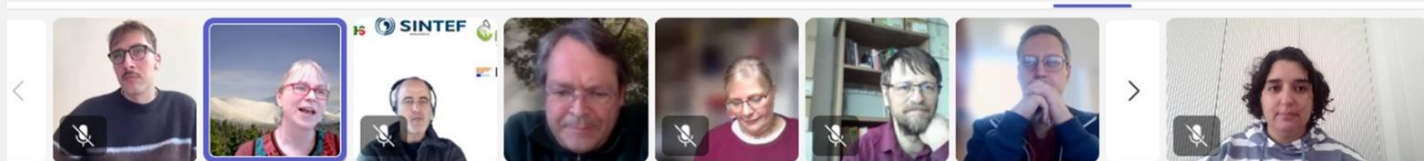
Launch of the PurPest quiz

To enhance engagement, the team developed a dedicated PurPest Quiz for the fair. By scanning a QR code displayed at the stand, visitors could answer questions about the project's objectives and plant health challenges.

The quiz proved to be an effective communication tool, generating strong interest and stimulating valuable conversations. Following its success at IPM Essen, the quiz will also be shared more broadly, allowing additional audiences to explore and learn about PurPest in an interactive format.



Project digital meeting, educational material, and dedicated podcast episode!



Welcome to the digital PurPest Project meeting- part 1!



The PurPest consortium held a two-day online [project meeting](#) on February 5 and 6, bringing together all partners to review project progress and coordinate next steps.

The meeting covered key scientific and technical advances in VOC collection and analysis, sensor development and integration, as well as updates on impact and cost analysis, communication and dissemination, and stakeholder engagement. Partners also discussed upcoming demonstration campaigns and reviewed the status of the second project review period.

The meeting reinforced collaboration across disciplines and institutions, ensuring alignment between research, technology development, and outreach activities, and supporting the effective implementation of the PurPest project.

New educational material available

Stelios Kartakis, from Wageningen University & Research, prepared and shared [new educational material](#) for the course “Life Science Economics and Policies”.

The lecture explores invasive alien species, the EU regulatory framework, and the PurPest project, with a focus on a case study on the fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) and its potential economic impact on European grain maize production.

“Sniffing out plant pests” podcast

A new podcast episode dedicated to PurPest has been released by our partners at NIBIO.

In this episode of “Bærekraft på øret”, **Andrea Ficke** discusses the PurPest project and its innovative approach to early pest detection.

Find out more and listen to the episode on our [website](#)!



From webinar on Healthy Nursery Plants to global phenomenon!

FREE WEBINAR

Healthy nursery plants – key to healthy horticulture, forestry and nature restorations




20 April 2026 | Online Event | SAVE THE DATE!



In April, we hosted our first webinar on “[Healthy Nursery Plants – key to healthy horticulture, forestry and nature restorations](#)”, and we didn’t anticipate the astounding response we received: **823 registered participants**, from **63 countries worldwide**, connecting experts from research, plant health authorities, nurseries, nursery associations, a wide range of companies, and the forestry sector. Watch the webinar [here!](#)

A big thank you to all speakers and participants for their valuable contributions!



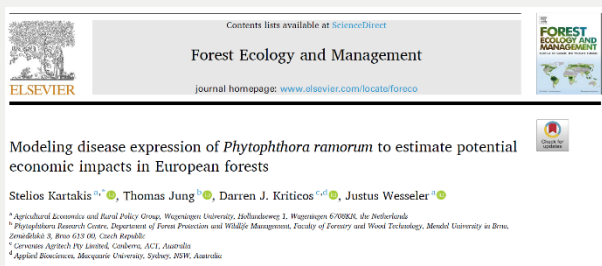
Best Poster award and event attendance

The INIAV team of PurPest received the Best Poster award at the [EPPO Conference on Diagnostics of Plant Pests](#) for the work “*Smart diagnostic for plant health: from e-noses to on-site molecular detection*”. Congratulations to **Maria L. Inácio**, **Jorge Faria**, and **Maria João Camacho**. At the conference, **Stelios Kartakis** and **Jorge Faria** also presented research on VOC sensor technology and early pinewood nematode detection.

Jorge Faria additionally delivered a PurPest [seminar at the University of Salamanca](#) on VOC-based plant pest detection approaches.

Latest publication

Kartakis S., Jung T., Kriticos D.J. & Wesseler J. (2026). Modeling disease expression of *Phytophthora ramorum* to estimate potential economic impacts in European forests, *Forest Ecology and Management*, 601: 123367. [10.1016/j.foreco.2025.123367](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foreco.2025.123367).



Save the date!

Following the outstanding success of our April webinar, we're excited to announce our **next stakeholder webinar on June 3**, about VOC sensors for early pest and pathogen detection. Registration details and full program available on our [website](#).



Stronger together!

The “[Related Projects](#)” section on our website highlights the importance of connecting EU-funded initiatives working toward shared goals in early pest detection and sustainable plant protection. By strengthening collaboration, knowledge exchange, and technological alignment, these projects are accelerating innovation in plant health, improving biosecurity, and supporting more sustainable agricultural practices across Europe.



Thank you for following PurPest!

Together, we advance early detection and sustainable plant health protection.

– The PurPest Team!

For the latest news and updates, follow us on:

