



This project has received funding from the European Union's H2020 Programme under grant agreement no 633571

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BUILDING VALORISATION STRATEGIES FOR BIODIVERSE PRODUCTS – THE APPROACH

AT FIRST GLANCE

The market valorisation of 'diverse food products' is crucial to increase diversity in farming systems. It involves multiple actors, from the field to the table, and requires an integrated approach to take into account several dimensions involved.

Embedding crop diversity and networking for local high quality food systems

Why a valorisation strategy?

The **enhancement of agrobiodiversity** builds on the social acknowledgment of its multiple values (environmental, ethical and cultural values), in all their manifestations, from the agro-ecological systems to the diet patterns. In this regard, the appreciation of the 'diverse food products' in the consumption practices is crucial.

The DIVERSIFOOD project has considered the promotion and valorisation of these products in the market as an integral part of a broader, collective action aimed at strengthening and promoting the whole production-consumption systems based on more diverse genetic resources, thus guaranteeing their sustainable use.

The **definition and implementation of a valorisation strategy** is therefore considered as a multi-actor process, based on the interaction among the various actors involved in breeding, farming, processing and consumption of the final products. Connection with similar pathways may offer further opportunities to broader actions of agrobiodiversity valorisation.

A multi-actor and multi-dimensional process

DIVERSIFOOD has described the valorisation strategy as composed of five action areas closely interdependent:

- **mobilisation of genetic resources**: actions aimed at knowing and managing the varieties relevant for local farming and consumption systems;
- **definition of specific quality**: actions to identify and codify the attributes of diverse products;
- **marketing and communication**: choices and tools to manage products in the market and convey values embodied in products and productions systems;
- **integration with other projects**: inter-connections with other projects/strategies, at local and broader scale;
- **effectiveness and sustainability**: capacity of the initiatives to contribute to agrobiodiversity enhancement, and to last over time.





The valorisation strategy is also seen as a multi-dimensional process. Understanding the functioning of each stage of the valorisation process and the ways it can effectively work implies to take into consideration several aspects:



- **technicalities and knowledge** around the implementation of activities and processes that are completely or to a certain extent new;
- **organisational issues** associated with the -interaction among the various actors involved;
- **institutional elements** mobilised to manage the various activities;
- **political and legislative aspects** that affect activities and processes;
- **social and cultural aspects** involved in the several processes that take place in the valorisation strategy;
- **economic conditions** where the new activities and processes can work.

Studied initiatives

DIVERSIFOOD has developed **five case studies**, chosen as examples of valorisation strategies in France, UK and Italy. They are all marketing initiatives for bread produced using landraces/old wheat varieties/newly breed wheat varieties through participatory breeding:

- **ITALY:** three regional initiatives, involving networks of farmers and processors, in cooperation with *Rete Semi Rurali*, engaged around cultivation of old wheat varieties, landraces and populations, and traditional bread making. Participatory breeding, production of bread with healthy properties, short chains and territorial embeddedness characterise these initiatives.
- **FRANCE:** a national programme, financed by public funds, involving a wide network including farmers gathered into local farmers' association belonging to *Réseau Semences Paysannes*. The aim is developing new population-varieties adapted to organic agriculture, free of intellectual property, farmer-managed, suitable for producing healthy flour and bread.
- **UK:** promotion on the market of products derived from a hugely diverse wheat population that is the result of an evolutionary breeding programme started 15 years ago to produce a population suited for organic and low-input farming systems. Despite the long breeding process, the initiative is at an early stage, thus the number of actors involved is still small and the market channels are relatively undeveloped.



Suggested readings

Brunori, G., Rossi A., D'Amico S. (2018) A Comprehensive and participatory approach to the valorisation of biodiverse products, in A. Isoni, M. Troisi, M. Pierri (eds) *Food Diversity between Rights, Duties and Autonomies. Legal Perspectives for a Scientific Cultural and Social Debate on the Right to Food and Agroecology*, LITES, vol. 2, Basel, CH: Springer International Publishing AG; Margret Will (2008) *Promoting Value Chains of Neglected and Underutilized Species for Pro-Poor Growth and Biodiversity Conservation. Guidelines and Good Practices*, Global Facilitation Unit for Underutilized Species (GFU), Rome.

This Innovation Factsheet is the result of the collective work of DIVERSIFOOD partners, coordinated by Adanella Rossi and Simona D'Amico (UNIFI) with the support of Bernadette Oehen (FiBL) and Tina Kovács (ÖMKI).