



PREPARATORY ACTION

EU plant and animal genetic resources in agriculture

Initiating valorisation projects
for plant and animal genetic
resources in agriculture

A User guide for local project promoters

Funded by the European Union



The publication is part of the study “Preparatory action on EU plant and animal genetic resources in agriculture”.

The Preparatory action has been initiated by the European Parliament and financed by the European Commission.

The objectives of the Preparatory action are to better understand the stakes of European neglected genetic resources in agriculture and to tap onto their economic potential.

It aims to provide inspiring examples of how to make the conservation of neglected breeds and varieties economically viable and encourage farmers and other stakeholders to engage.

This guide is a baseline document that may need to be adapted to specific situations.

Translation of this document in national languages by national actors will increase its value and promote its use at local level to the extent that it brings added values for the relevant actors.

Legal notice

The information and views set out in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Commission. The Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this publication. Neither the Commission nor any person acting on the Commission's behalf may be held responsible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE?	2
ABOUT THIS GUIDE	3
APPROACH TO A SUCCESSFUL VALORISATION INITIATIVE	4
1. You have an idea! Identify Your genetic resources and their key values.	4
2. Define Your valorisation objectives and strategy (the valorisation plan)	5
3. Mobilise resources.....	8
4. Set-up the organisation of the project	9
5. Define the identity of Your products/services and "construct" their values and qualities: "Build the Story"	10
6. Structure the production and establish Your supply chain.....	12
7. Define the marketing approach: How to differentiate Your products on the market?	13
8. Set-up synergies with other local actors (stakeholders, public bodies and authorities, and consumers).....	15
9. Ensure appropriate funding	15
10. Evaluate Your valorisation project/initiative: Are You successful?	17
SEARCH FOR MORE GOOD PRACTICES IN THE PREPARATORY ACTION	19



INTRODUCTION

The conservation and sustainable use of agricultural plant and animal genetic resources is vital in order to sustaining agricultural economies in changing socio-economic and climatic scenarios. Agricultural genetic diversity is associated with a wide range of environmental benefits or ecosystem services as well as new concepts of economic developments like short supply chains. Finally, genetic resources often have a local/regional heritage value and therefore are of high social and cultural importance in many different territories.

The conservation of genetic diversity within agriculture should be enhanced by promoting the sustainable use of neglected plant varieties and animal breeds¹ in order to make conservation economically viable. Promoting the sustainable use of plant and animal genetic resources is a key strategy to enhance *in situ* or on farm conservation.

The process of valorising endangered breeds or neglected varieties should take into consideration the strong links with the production territory. Not without reason this strategy generally has a strong impact on the local system from a socio-economic and socio-cultural point of view. For these reasons, valorisation strategies are generally unique and need to be supported by their own valorisation model. However, good practices can be extracted from successful local/regional initiatives.

The objective of this User guide is to support potentially interested stakeholders and actors to start valorisation projects in the area of endangered animal breeds and neglected plant varieties. This guide aims to satisfy a number of different requirements ranging from inception to full establishment of a sustainable valorisation initiative.

This User guide is based on the outcomes of the "Preparatory action – EU plant and animal genetic resources in agriculture" carried out for the European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, which took place over a three year period (2016-2018).

In addition to this guide, the results of the preparatory action consist of the following documents:

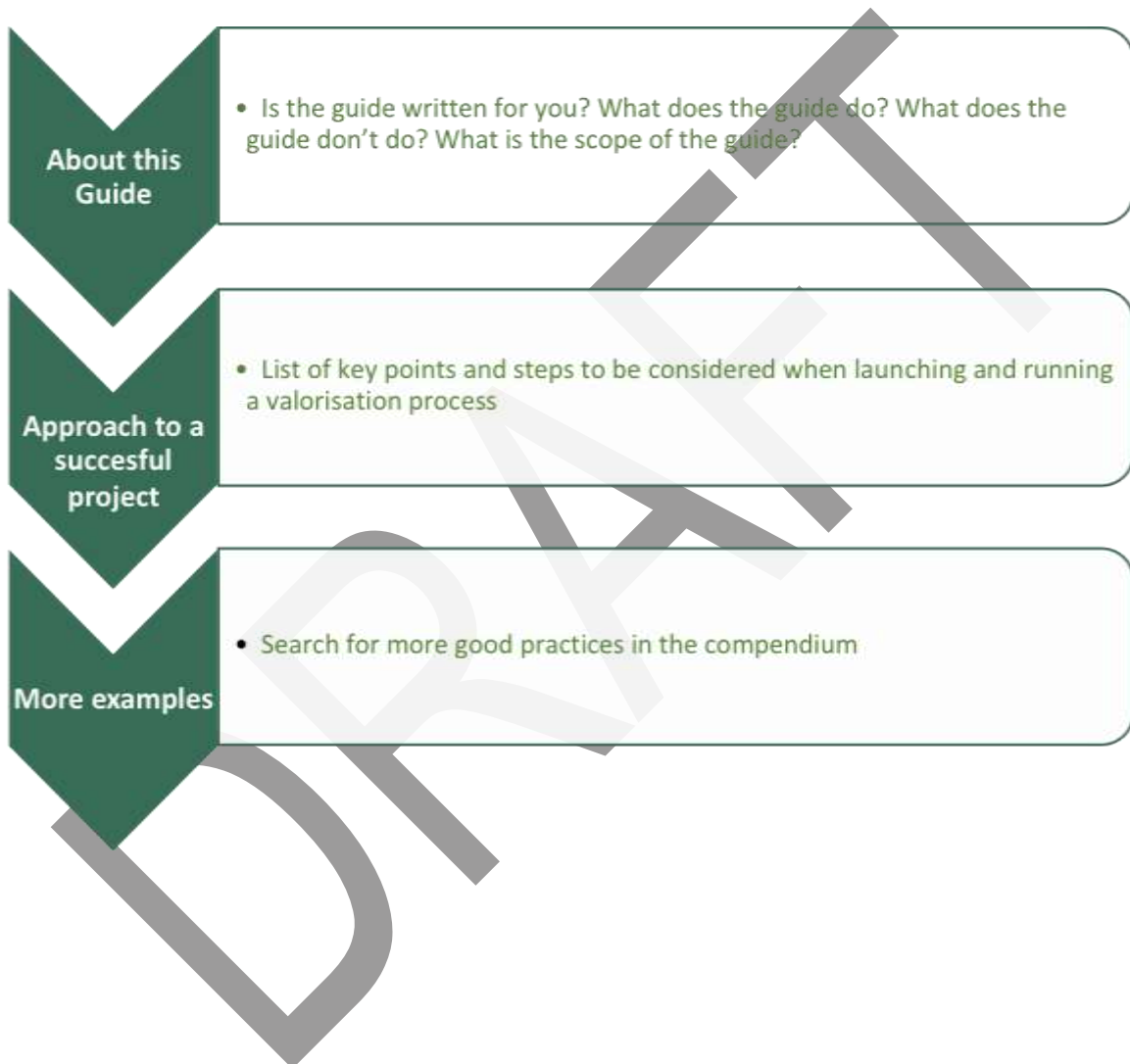
- *Preparatory action report with an executive summary, synthesis and lessons learned*
- *Compendium of 56 projects aiming at valorising neglected agricultural genetic resources*
- *Booklet presenting the scope and outcomes of the preparatory action with a focus of the four projects under study*
- *Leaflets of each of four projects (initiated by the project) and under analysis*
- *Video clip presenting each of these four projects.*

These documents can be found at: [xxx](#)

¹ In the context of this document, the terms "traditional", "local", "underutilised", and "endangered" are equally used.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE?

The User guide is structured as follows:



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This User guide aims to be a hands-on, easy to read document that provides a checklist of topics to be considered which benefits everyone aiming to set up a new – or reflecting on an existing – valorisation project of genetic resources (both plant genetic resources-PGR and animal genetic resources-AnGR).

This document should not be considered as a fully complete handbook covering each and every aspect of setting up valorisation projects in all contexts. Given the diversity of existing situations (animal species and breeds/plant species and varieties, countries, socio-economic and agro-ecological context, etc.) and the many factors influencing the success of a project, this guide provides general recommendations which have to be fine-tuned to individual initiatives and situations.

This document offers guidance and inspiration to anyone who wishes to discover how to draw up a valorisation strategy that is best suited to a specific case or situation using methodological and operational information. This guidance document is illustrated by concrete cases and examples which have been identified during the course of the preparatory action, and which are reported in the compendium of projects and in the descriptive presentation of the four projects under the preparatory action.

The valorisation of genetic resources and their associated products is a particularly complex challenge due to some of the characteristics of these neglected plant varieties and endangered animal breeds, starting with their collective dimension and strong links to the territory. These elements mean that such projects are not limited to companies operating in the various stages of the production process, but also include the farmers and farmers associations, the inhabitants and local society, local institutions, consumers and their organisations. They are often not solely interested in the strictly business aspects of the valorisation of a typical product, but take into consideration the effects on the local production system and, in general, on the territory of origin of the product, the identity of the population and the local culture, and even on the agro-eco-systems associated with the genetic resources.

Due to this complexity each valorisation project initiative needs to develop its own tailored approach. For endangered animal breeds and underutilised plant varieties there is a need for a specific user guide to support actors and producers involved in drawing up a valorisation strategy. This user guide provides general and not project-specific guidance. It proposes good practices that could be adapted to and used for new initiatives and individual projects.

APPROACH TO A SUCCESSFUL VALORISATION INITIATIVE

The valorisation of genetic resources requires a series of decisions and activities that are interconnected and interdependent. This process of valorisation is the result of a strategy of all actors involved in the project and can ideally be broken down into a series of actions/steps to be taken which are closely linked but not necessarily consecutive. The different steps of a typical valorisation process read as follows:

1. You have an idea! Identify the genetic resources and their key values. Search for successful valorisation examples
2. Define your valorisation objectives, valorisation strategy and valorisation plan
3. Mobilise resources
4. Set-up the organisation of Your project
5. Define the identity of Your products/services and “constructs” their qualities: “Build the Story”
6. Organise the production and create Your supply chain
7. Define the marketing approach: how to differentiate Your products on the market?
8. Set-up synergies with other local actors (stakeholders, public bodies and authorities, and consumers)
9. Finance Your project
10. Evaluate Your valorisation initiative: are You successful?

These steps follow a chronological order which is applicable in most of cases. However for specific projects, this order may need to be adapted.

Each chapter lists key points for attention and is illustrated with concrete examples of good practices which have been identified during the Preparatory action. These examples, which are briefly described, are providing useful information on how to proceed. Readers are invited to consult the other deliverables of the Preparatory action at: [xxx](#) for more information.

1. You have an idea! Identify Your genetic resources and their key values.

Safeguarding endangered animal breeds and underutilised plant varieties requires specific valorisation strategies. Mainstream supply chains for mainstream products of mainstream animal breeds and plant varieties will not result in sufficient income for breeders/farmers of endangered breeds or underutilised plant varieties, in order to be able to conserve those breeds or varieties for the future. On the other hand, endangered breeds

and underutilised varieties often have many different values and specific features, which values provide opportunities for valorisation and commercialisation.



- **For which endangered animal breed(s) or underutilised plant variety(ies) would you like to develop a valorisation strategy?**
- **What are the main values, features and characteristics of the genetic resource that would make it interesting to invest in a valorisation strategy?**
- **Have you benchmarked your preliminary ideas with (successful) examples?**

The first step is to brainstorm and come up with ideas for valorisation of specific genetic resources. After identifying the genetic resources it is very relevant to search for other (successful) valorisation examples and to compare your preliminary valorisation ideas with other initiatives or projects.

GOOD PRACTICE

Producers or breeders can easily make the list of all advantages and disadvantages of their breed/variety. Then the most important step is to find among the disadvantages which ones can be turned in advantages: most of time, disadvantages that are linked to yield farming and lower level of production are compensated by stronger taste or higher nutrient concentration.

For instance in **Czech Republic**, the **Prestice Black pig** was abandoned in the 1990's and replaced by breeds with intense growth and high share of lean meat, but Prestice Black pig is still interesting for its adaptability, resistance and the recognisable taste of its meat.

In **Germany**, the pear "**Champagne-Bratbirne**" actors put forward its high content of tannins, potentially beneficial for health, and the fact that this pear produces a lower quantity of alcohol compared to classic sparkling wines.

Finding successful experiences is of key importance: in Spain, the project **Spiga Negra organic pasta** was looking for specific processing equipment. The producers visited several producing plants in Sicily before finding the proper infrastructure (press, bronze moulds, drying cupboards, etc.) for their own project.

2. Define Your valorisation objectives and strategy (the valorisation plan)

Valorisation has already been described as a complex process that involves several actors who need to share the same values and objectives. This chapter discusses the various steps that need to be taken in order to define a valorisation strategy/plan.

From the findings of the four projects supported during the preparatory action and from the

analysis of the compendium² which includes scenarios on various local production systems that have set up valorisation strategies, it can be seen that, in the early phases of the process, although not as a rule, the initiative is often taken by a small group of actors (made up exclusively or jointly of producers, technicians, local institutions, etc.). These actors usually belong to the territory or who may even come from outside the same but who are in some way interested or involved in the production of novel products from neglected genetic resource.

In a valorisation process, the group of “promoters” should work towards extending the concept to other actors, searching for “alliances” (i.e. active participation) in the territory and, above all, avoid or suitably manage any potential “conflicts” that may arise with other local actors who have a different view of the strategies to be brought forward.

The latter aspect regarding “conflict management” represents a crucial part of the valorisation process not just due to its impacts on the potential expansion and consolidation of the specific production system and the relationships between local and non-local actors, but also due to its effects on the integration of the valorisation strategy with broader strategies for the promotion of local resources. In fact, in such cases, the typical product, with the symbol it carries due to its close links with the territory, can become a “catalyst” for other local promotional initiatives.

In the light of these brief initial considerations, a possible rule for defining a valorisation strategy could be developed by answering the following preliminary “key” questions:

- **How do we characterise ourselves?**
- **What is our current situation?**
- **What do we want to achieve? Do we share the same objectives?**
- **How do we want to get there?**

For each of these questions we present the main points on which to focus whilst underlining, once again, that the process of defining a valorisation strategy is a complex one, within which the various actors involved have to interact with each other, pooling their knowledge, opinions and interests, thus initiating a learning process that will lead to an increased awareness of their own means as well as a shared vision of their own situation. This fundamental premise is necessary in order to be able to identify common objectives and plan actions to be carried out.

At the inception of the project, the implementation of a valorisation process should include a comparison of the various perceptions and objectives of the actors of the project. This first phase is aimed at generating or strengthening an awareness of the objectives of the project.

The analysis should begin with discussions leading to an agreement on what the project aims at achieving. This step is fundamental to secure that project’s members are, all, sharing the same opinions, views on what should be achieved through the project.

² The compendium includes a set of 56 successful valorisation projects. Available at [xxx](#)

The purpose of this question is to make actors to reflect on the initial situation using a method that will make it possible to get the actors themselves to agree on a common operational framework. This discussion should include elements related to the available technical and financial resources, including expertise and experience in the development of such valorisation project. The outcome of this question should be a diagnosis of the initial situation that would include strengths; weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the future project (SWOT analysis).

The next key question relates to the objectives of the project to be initiated. The information acquired previously is now used by the actors involved to define and agree upon the goals the project is proposed to achieve which will be described in the valorisation plan. From an operational point of view, it is possible to distinguish between general objectives and specific objectives. Once these general objectives have been defined it is also necessary to identify more specific objectives that can be used to formulate the valorisation plan. All these objectives have to be clearly described and recorded in the valorisation plan in regards to the diagnosis developed previously. Specific objectives should aim at playing on strengths, acting on weaknesses, exploiting opportunities and preparing to tackle threats.

Once the previous questions have been answered and the specific objectives to be pursued have been defined, the actors of the future project should define and schedule the initiatives to be taken. The preparation of a valorisation plan consists of identifying a coherent series of actions through which the objectives can be achieved.

Each of the four projects that were part of the preparatory action provides good practices on how to prepare a well-design approach that takes into account the local/regional socio-economic and environmental situation of each genetic resource. The four strategies and implementation plans³ provide detailed information on how to define Your valorisation plan. The variability of situation should also provide enough insight to provide good practices for most of cases.

The sharing of common objectives and strategy seems to be a prerequisite to any project but the groups of actors frequently forget to formalise these common objectives, which are not always the same as individual objectives of each actor. One good practice is to ask to all actors to list all their objectives (individual and/or group objectives) and then prioritising them in a consensual way. This exercise can occur at any step of the project, but the earlier, the better.

Once the objectives are clear and the action plan is defined, it is of key importance to share this information and, regularly, adapt the action plan.

GOOD PRACTICE

In **Austria**, the **Heirloom Leithaberg cherries** producers first analysed common economic and social needs of cherry producers before creating their association.

In **France** for the **Astarac Black Hen** project the association has been facing difficulties with a few members who were not sharing the same objectives. In this case the members who

³ These documents are available at [xxx](#)

disagreed had to quit the association – in other cases the common objectives can be re-adapted to the group.

In **Danemark**, the **White Danish Rabbit association** established a detailed project plan with clear objectives and deadlines. This document was communicated and distributed amongst actors in order to be monitored and updated during a series of meetings.

In **France**, the **Taste Conservatory** developed a short strategic document listing the main objectives and actions to be reached and implemented. The 5 page documents includes 6 main sections: i) introduction and motivation for launching the initiative, ii) objectives, iii) activities to be implemented, iv) development approach (how to develop this market?), v) tools necessary for each action and vi) actors and partners to be involved.

3. Mobilise resources

Initiatives aimed at valorising neglected genetic resources are based on the mobilisation of dedicated and often limited number of individuals. The idea of developing a new project is often initially discussed by a small group of a few individuals. For this reason, it is important to pay careful attention to the development of this group and the mobilisation of resources (involvement of the different types of actors: from producers to consumers) to initiate and develop the project.

At very early stages of the initiative, in-kind resources are required. The project leaders are dedicated to spend time to explain their projects in order to find alliances and partners for the project. However, this initial motivation can disappear if no additional technical and financial resources are identified to further develop the project.

Considering the lack of structure and resources at inception of these types of projects, it is necessary to reflect on how the project will be able to take-off:

- **What are the available financial and in-kind resources?**
- **How can we increase these resources for a quicker development and implementation of the project?**
- **Can we get funded? By whom?**

As mentioned above, most of these projects include the local and territorial dimensions which make that the list of potential actors that could bring resources to the project is larger than the ones traditionally use in agricultural projects. The potential cultural and heritage dimensions of the projects may interest other types of actors, usually not involved in agricultural projects such as tourism centres, natural parks, local consumer groups, etc.). Project initiators are invited to contact these types of actors at inception of the project.

GOOD PRACTICE

The **French initiative Conservatoire du Goût** provides good insight on how to build the project team by identifying and linking all actors necessary to build Your supply chain. Several meetings and workshops were organised locally to discuss with persons who were

interested to join the initiative. These discussions allowed an identification of the key persons that were needed in the project. Secondly, this example demonstrates that communication is also of key importance; therefore Your project should also include actors who are going to communicate outside the project in order to promote it within the local/regional economic networks and the institutional bodies.

Multidisciplinary approaches often lead to the integration of diverse categories of actors in the same project: for instance in **Croatia**, the **Istrian cattle project** is based on an extended team and benefits from a wide network including breeders, processors, traders, caterers, scientific institutions and local, regional and national governments.

Some groups go even further by considering the need of the transfer of knowledge, like the project **Kurtovo Konare Pink Tomatoes in Bulgaria**, which mobilises technical and financial stakeholders (farmers, distributors, local authorities) as well as cultural/heritage stakeholders (cultural centers and schools).

4. Set-up the organisation of the project

Most of times the idea to set-up and develop a valorisation project comes from one or two individuals. Therefore the management of valorisation projects usually depends on a very limited number of persons, who are often volunteers with varying amount of time available. Managerial qualities and devotion to the cause of the project vary enormously.

It is not enough to have an idea, have you been reflecting on the following issues:

- **What to do first? With whom?**
- **Do I need to create a legal structure?**
- **How to coordinate activities? Are we skilled enough to run this coordination ourselves?**
- **Do we need support for the day-to-day management of the network?**

Instead of "reinventing the wheel", it is recommended to build on existing experiences which, preferably, took place in the neighbourhood. A project, designed in close cooperation with an already existing project in the valorisation of neglected genetic resources or rare breeds, seems to guarantee access to participants and up-to-date information on how to organise the project.

There is no general rule that determines the best legal basis for the organising entity of a project. However it is recommended to create one legal entity. At inception of the project, the preferred approach would be to set-up an association. Your objectives and Your financial resources and the main factors determining what legal structure choice to make. However it is recommended to "start small!" by setting-up an association that could be replaced by another legal form such as a private company, a cooperative, etc. at a later stage.

Often, project initiators have no sufficient time to devote to their project in order to implement all necessary steps. Therefore it is recommended to establish a coordination body

within the project. This means that a coordinator should be identified in support to the launch of the initiative. Each of the four projects which were accompanied during the preparatory action has highlighted the importance of this function. For project where coordination was in place it was observed that progress was faster.

This coordinator should perform administrative tasks related to e.g. the establishment of the legal entity, the organisation of the meetings between members of the project, exchange of information between members, relations with external partners; but it should not be limited to administrative tasks.

Examples from the compendium clearly demonstrate that in cases where a technical field support is associated to the administrative coordination more progress is observed. This technical field support takes the form of an individual who is visiting each project member to discuss on how to implement the different tasks that would lead to reaching the objectives of the project.

GOOD PRACTICE

The **French project Mouton Boulonnais** benefits from the presence of a technical engineer who is regularly visiting members of the project to discuss about progress, issues observed in implementing tasks and on solutions on how to solve these issues. This local presence of technical expertise comforts members of the project and move them forward.

Project coordination can also be handled by the producers themselves, but this solution can only work if the project leaders have the necessary management skills, in addition to their technical and agricultural skills. The **Spanish project Plantaromed** highlights the role and coordination between farmers and researchers: this approach can actively participate in generating and sharing useful information about local varieties to the farmers.

5. Define the identity of Your products/services and “construct” their values and qualities: “Build the Story”

Defining the identity of Your products is a strategic area in which the actors of the valorisation project define the identity of the typical products they want to develop and market and “build” their qualities, thus creating the conditions for the products to be able to relate to the outside. This construction shall include all economic dimensions of the products but not only: history, heritage and cultural dimensions shall be integrated too.

Build a Story around Your Project !

- **Have you been reflecting on what you want to create? What products do you want to market?**
- **Are you sure that consumers will appreciate Your products?**



This task does not end at project level since the products the project wants to develop and promote are the results of the commitment and heritage of both a community of actors and, more in general, of a local society. Neglected crops and rare breeds are anchored in a territory. The “story” should clearly highlight this particularity that makes these products unique in a period when consumers don’t know where their food is being produced and processed. This approach aims to create the most appropriate relation conditions between the product (and the producers, or the system of producers) and its market (the consumers).

The awareness of the deep historical and geographical roots that a genetic resource has in the territory and the specificity it presents with respect to conventional agricultural products often leads the actors involved in the valorisation projects to commit two major errors. The first error is to assume that, by virtue of its uniqueness, the product has its own well defined identity which is fully shared by all the actors involved in the valorisation process (producers and processors). In reality, the identity of a product has to be redefined, starting with its relationship with local resources. The failure to consider these aspects or to search for solutions which are shared as much as possible amongst actors is often one of the causes of the lack of success or failure of valorisation initiatives. On the other hand, it is not always possible to mediate between the different actors involved; in such cases the result of the process may be a conflict between actors leading to the halt of the valorisation project.

The second error is to believe that the “qualities” of the products derived from neglected crops and rare breeds can – and should – be automatically understood and appreciated by consumers. If this does not happen, the blame is placed on the use of the wrong instruments of communication or simply not having put enough financial resources into promotional and advertising actions.

All in all, actions related to building the “story” aim to ensure that the actors of the projects organise a well-defined valorisation process that makes it possible to specify the identity of the products themselves, particularly in the eyes of the actors and consumers in terms of culture, heritage, and history.

GOOD PRACTICE

Several projects succeeded in constructing their history by combining historical and traditional elements with technical or aesthetic innovations: see the **Lanatura project in Slovenia**, which ensures that a large amount of wool is processed and used in the local area thanks to traditional uses of wool (balls of wool, clothing) combined with interesting innovations: soap from animal fat and milk, fur colouring with natural dyes, use of wool in bio-architecture or as a natural additive to improve soil properties.

The **Croatian Malvasia Grapevine** project also gives a nice example of story-building: the successful reintroduction of the grapevine was partly achieved thanks to its history (dating back to the Dubrovnik Republic period) and great efforts to relaunch the variety through modern production methods and technologies. The variety became even more visible to traditional winemaking, local production, family business and renowned tourist places.

6. Structure the production and establish Your supply chain

At very early stages, the project should structure the production of the products it wants to market and establish its supply chain. Production is initiated locally and projects may struggle with market access as, for example, the structure of the conventional supply chain may not be adapted to the objectives of the project or the characteristics of the products (e.g. not uniform vegetables products that can not be distributed via the classical supply chains).

These situations can be cases of presence of the obstacles preventing local food producers to gain a market position despite the growing consumer/citizen interests in local food products. In addition, local producers tend to perceive the traditional market channels such as retailers as less profitable. Based on the analysis of the four projects under the preparatory action and the findings of the compendium, many producers prefer to sell their products through alternative market channels such as farmer markets, cooperatives, farm outlets and local food schemes. In most of cases, the preferred option would be to follow these market channels.

The initial step of the establishment of Your supply chain would be to analyse its characteristics as follows:

- **Production:**
 - **Do we go for a group production or not? For which tasks?**
 - **How many producers can engage in the production?**
 - **How to organise the logistic for the collection of products?**
 - **Do we want uniformity of the products (taste, labelling, etc.)?**
- **Products:**
 - **How many different products to market?**
 - **Which volumes of products do I plan to market for the coming 3 years?**
 - **What makes my products unique?**
- **Market:**
 - **How can we assess the market potential?**
 - **Is there a market for my products?**
 - **Is there a seasonal demand pattern?**

The main elements in the supply chain for local food producers are the unique and special features of the products and the production. These need to be embedded into a system which creates flexibility in production and distribution, builds on collaboration with partners and create strong links with customers.

GOOD PRACTICE

Several projects included in the compendium present supply chains that have been created during the valorisation process (see for example the Mouton Boulonnais and the Cul Noir Limousin in France, the Rouge Pie Noir in Belgium, etc.). These supply chains allow faster differentiation on the market place versus conventional products, even with the use of simple brands.

Projects often have to cope with a shortage of animals or seed, especially at the beginning of the project (as it happened for **Malvasia Grapevine** in **Croatia**), but you have not to be afraid of these transitional periods. The most important is to be able to inform the farmers or resellers concerning the delays. Good communication on the reasons for these shortcomings and the maintenance of a "waiting list" is usually sufficient.

It is also possible to opt for an integrated organisation, based on coordination and agreement between supply chain actors, for a better management of supply and demand or even for adapting the level of production: in **Belgium, Agribio project** combines the different steps of the supply chain (production, processing and sales) for valorising old cereals varieties. At the production level, in the **Spanish Spiga Negra** project the processor is directly in contact with producers, allowing an optimised planning of the cereal production adapted to its pasta production.

Heterogeneity of the products due to non-selection of genetic resources has to be taken into account too. The **Prestice Black-Pied pig** in **Czech Republic** shows that it is possible to create a marketing strategy based on the identification of a niche market based on an alternative production system with seasonal grazing and on the growing demand for high quality food products. The **German Limpurg Ox** project developed a quality system with butchers and chefs, in order to market the whole animal ("from nose to tail") by producing many different quality products like fresh meat and different types of sausages. Then all products contribute to a higher value for breeders, not only the most expensive cuts. When fresh meat is not available, sausages and convenience products allow a year-round offer.

7. Define the marketing approach: How to differentiate Your products on the market?

Marketing activities begin with an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the products (and of the story !) in relation to the characteristics of the market (what are consumers expecting?) to be served.

When launching a marketing initiative, the actors involved in the valorisation process must ask themselves the following questions:

- **Which are the current strengths and weaknesses of our production and sales system?**

- **Which are the opportunities to grasp and the threats to beware of?**
- **On which specific characteristics is the reputation of the products we want to valorise based?**
- **What is (are) our consumer target group(s)?**
- **Which financial and human resources are available to us? How is it possible to mobilise other resources?**
- **Which decisions should be taken regarding the characteristics of the product, the price, the promotion and the distribution channels (marketing mix)?**

One of the biggest problems encountered during the marketing phase is the lack of skills. This has been confirmed in the implementation of the four projects under the Preparatory action. The setting up of valorisation initiatives for genetic resources nearly always requires a "quality leap" in marketing through the adoption of innovative marketing methods that will secure product differentiation. The creation of a specific supply chain clearly identified at consumers' level is therefore a clear response to this need of differentiation. However creating a new supply chain can also create issues when the products are of little importance to the actors and/or family income, such as producers that only get a small part of their total income from this new supply chain.

This means that launching a marketing initiative requires a careful preliminary assessment of the means available for achieving the objectives. The scarcity of own available resources makes it necessary to plan actions to mobilise all potential resources in the territory, as well as searching for the necessary skills and financial means.

GOOD PRACTICE


The **Portuguese Vale do Sousa** project identified and developed a wide range of processed products to secure a potential market for the final product. The development of additional products is still ongoing, including products for gluten intolerant people and people suffering from celiac diseases. The diversity of products secures that, at least, some of these products will develop their volumes of sales.

Some projects aim for the highest aesthetic quality to reach consumers (e.g. **Spanish Malaga goat** with cultural and artistic actions like painting competition and the **Irish Heritage Apple Collection** with the placement of a high-quality publication in all public libraries at national level). These actions help promoting the products and provide good reputation.

Other projects use modern technologies for informing consumers and avoiding frauds on products origins, like the **Hungarian Grey Cattle** project which indicates the animal's number on each meat package through labelling, allowing any consumer to request for information through SMS exchange with the butchers.

8. Set-up synergies with other local actors (stakeholders, public bodies and authorities, and consumers)

The valorisation of genetic resources finds the necessary conditions as well as the maximum efficiency in a collective and territorial dimension. Very often, the project leaders consider that the integration of the projects in the territory is one of their key objectives. It is, therefore recommended to include the projects in a broader valorisation project involving local resources, based on the close interaction between the various local actors (actors involved in the production system, public bodies, institutions, and consumers).

- 
- **Are you connected with local actors (municipalities, chambers of commerce, local and regional authorities, etc.)?**
 - **Have you reflected on: “What can they do for my project?” and “What can I do for them?”**
 - **Can you guarantee their support (in-kind and/or funding)?**
 - **Is my network of institutional actors complete?**

In other words, it is recommended to build and set up a network of relations on a local level (firstly amongst the producers, but also with local public institutions, research institutes and professional organisations) and on a non-local level (with public regional, national and EC institutions, banks and credit institutions, research, technical and business assistance centres).

Due to the specificity of typical products, the resources that can be mobilised may come from sources not normally available to other types of products and production systems. In fact, the concentration of businesses in the territory and the strong cultural-identity relationship with the local community makes it possible to request the direct intervention of a wide range of stakeholders, from local actors (tourist associations, organisations for the promotion of the territory, territorial public bodies, and local credit institutions) to non-local actors, national.

GOOD PRACTICE

In several projects presented in the compendium, projects found a valid ally in the **Slow Food** association which had been already launched several initiatives (e.g. **Ark of Taste** which is an international catalogue of endangered heritage food which is maintained by the global Slow Food movement). By doing so, **Slow Food** hopes to promote the growing and eating of food which are sustainable and preserve biodiversity in the human food chain. Therefore, Slow-Food aims to promote the use of neglected crops and rare breeds in novel supply chains as part of a more general objective of developing novel products from the standardisations imposed by the conventional food industry.

9. Ensure appropriate funding

An important factor in the successful implementation of Your project is the availability

of the financial resources or a stream of annual income to cover the minimal expenditures of the project.

The actions identified most likely require external financial resources to achieve results, since it is difficult to carry out such actions relying solely on internal resources. One can observe that in the large majority of cases faced with a scarcity of available resources for valorisation initiatives. Moreover, considering that valorisation is usually a collective process and often concerns productions that are still in the early stages of development, there is, in general, little financial engagement of actors for this type of activity.

Locating financial resources is a process that must follow a number of “key steps”, without which there is a risk of “burning” the project. The following issues should be discussed between the project members:

- **When to search for financial means ?**
- **Who should be approached ?**
- **How to approach institutions? Do we have the corresponding network for approaching them?**

Whilst there are many different sources of financing available, it is often necessary to first decide whether to request support for the single actions making up the valorisation process, presenting the project to one or more financial backers who, in turn will evaluate the merits and level of cohesion of the project, before deciding whether or not to provide financial/funding support.

One of the most difficult aspects of financing a valorisation project is screening the existing opportunities, i.e., researching and selecting the financing offers available. A project may be financed through public instruments as well as other types of financing that may originate from private institutions (foundations, non-profit-making organisations, etc.), private enterprises or other subjects (the local population, consumers, citizens) which may decide to offer various degrees of support to the project.

GOOD PRACTICE

During the screening process, institutions offering free consulting services can be of assistance, these are often institutions financed by local agencies. Take contacts with your regional administration and visit your Chamber of commerce.

Being officially recognised as a rare breed or variety is an important step too to be financed at a national level, especially by the EU Rural Development Programme. Information on the conditions for recognition is available from each Ministry of Agriculture and contacts can sometimes lead to direct support from governments (see examples of the **Connemara Pony** project in **Ireland**, the **Ruzrok sorghum** initiative in **Czech Republic**, the **Potato Onion** project in **Finland**, or the **Heritage Apple Collection** initiative in **Ireland**). See, also, the following website: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/networking/nrn-profiles_en.

10. Evaluate Your valorisation project/initiative: Are You successful?

The valorisation process, involving several type of actors (producers/breeders, processors, distributors, etc.) must include a regular analysis of its functioning.

Project leaders should reflect on the success of their initiatives by wondering:

- **Is the project successful?**
- **How can I assess its success?**

This analysis can be carried out using a wide range of methodological approaches but You need, first, indicators to assess the success of an initiative (in economic benefits for the farmers/breeders, in terms of profitability of the whole project, in terms of positive impact on safeguarding endangered/underutilised genetic resources, in terms of increased awareness of consumers/citizens, in terms of partnerships, etc...).

We propose to limit this analysis to the use of the following two tools:

- **Analysis of the supply chain** i.e. the actors that are directly or indirectly involved along the supply chain from the initial stage of production to the final stage of marketing. This analysis aims at assessing the various processes and activities (of a technical, commercial and financial nature) at every stage of the project. The purpose of the analysis is to determine which part of the initiative can be improved. The analysis should, also, highlights the various interactions between these processes and the strategies guiding the actors' behaviour. More flexible the processes are, faster the project growth rate is.
- **Context analysis (SWOT analysis).** SWOT is instrumental for defining the valorisation strategy as presented above (see Point 2) and should, also, be used to measure the progresses. Therefore we propose to perform a new SWOT analysis after 2-3 years with the objective to systematically analyse the various factors that positively and/or negatively condition a certain valorisation process. For this reason, such analysis represents another important phase in the project as it is possible to "calibrate" any action strategies that have to be defined in the initial valorisation plan.

GOOD PRACTICE

The coordination body of Your project should be in charge of coordinating this monitoring action. If no coordination has been implemented yet, this action would preferably be performed by an external person not involved in the valorisation process in order to address this assessment in a neutral way.

DRAFT

SEARCH FOR MORE GOOD PRACTICES IN THE PREPARATORY ACTION

Visit the file **"Find Good Examples in the E Compendium"** to identify additional good practices and consult the compendium at: **xxx**.

DRAFT



Stay informed

The 2016-2018 project "Preparatory action – EU plant and animal genetic resources in agriculture" has been commissioned and funded by the European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development.

Contract number

30-CE-0754350/00-08

For more information on the preparatory action and for the end report, please visit

https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/external-studies_en

or

www.geneticresources.eu

DRAFT



PREPARATORY ACTION

EU plant and animal genetic
resources in agriculture