

# 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.

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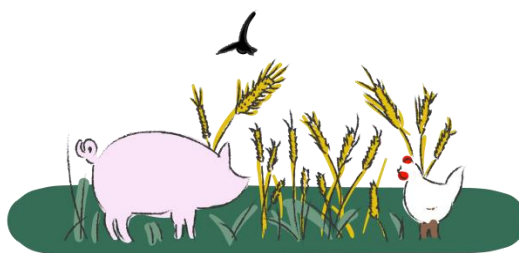
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## INTRODUCTION

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The conservation and sustainable use of agricultural plant and animal genetic resources is vital in order to sustain 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. 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 breeds<sup>1</sup> 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: *in situ* conservation actions began for some breeds/varieties more than 30 years ago and helped to stop the decline in numbers and to make these breeds/varieties known in their region. The current urgency is to ensure the transition between generations of breeders, and the economic valuation of products is crucial for attracting new producers.

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 leading to sustainable conservation of genetic resources.**

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<sup>1</sup> In the context of this document, the terms “traditional”, “local”, “underutilised”, and “endangered” are equally used.

*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:*

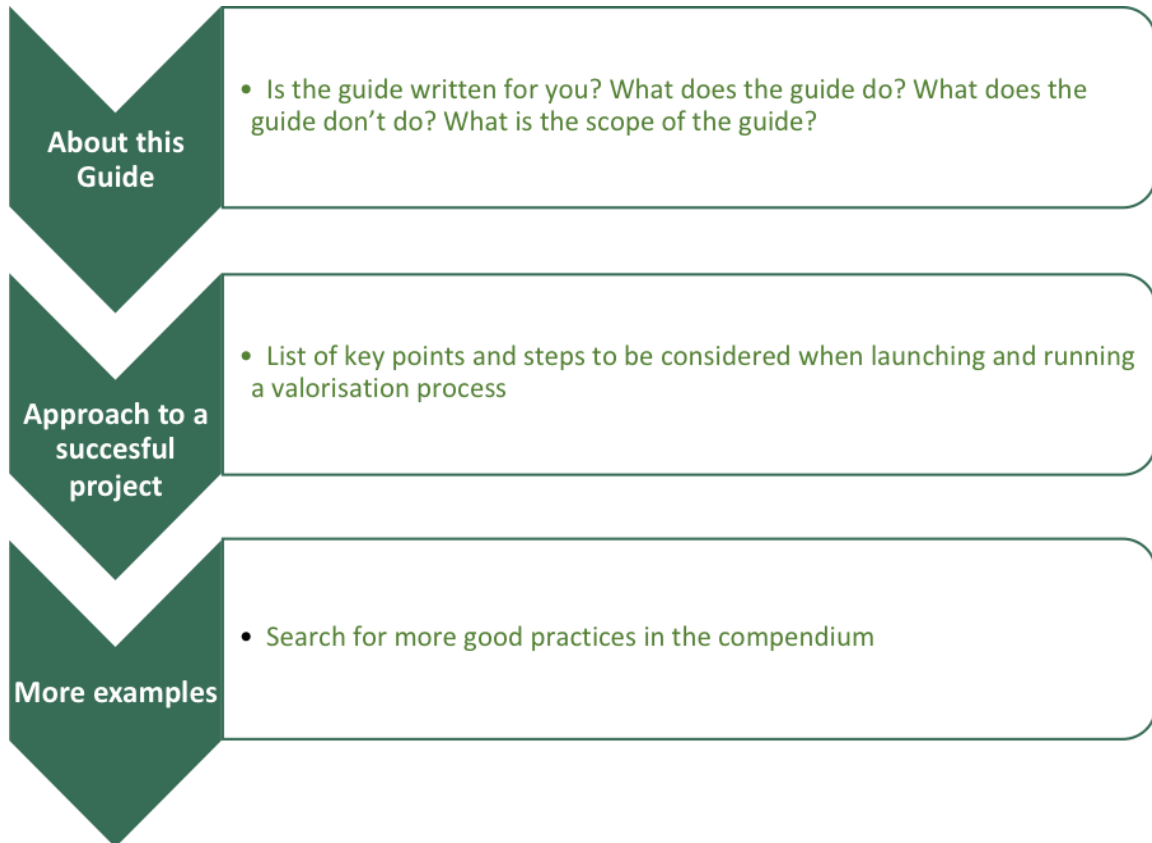
- *Preparatory action report with an executive summary, synthesis of the results and lessons learned*
- *Compendium of 56 projects aiming at valorising neglected agricultural genetic resources*
- *Booklet presenting the scope and outcomes of the preparatory action with a focus of the four projects under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

*These documents can be found at <http://www.geneticresources.eu>*

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE?

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The user guide is structured as follows:



## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

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**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. This guide presents examples of animal breeds and plant variety but can be equally used in the case of other genetic resources such as fishes, microorganisms, and forestry genetic resources.**

**Who is this guide for? This guide has been drafted to help all different types of users e.g. groups of producers, NGO facilitators, representatives of local or national authorities to draft a roadmap and implement a plan for any valorisation project.**

However, 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.

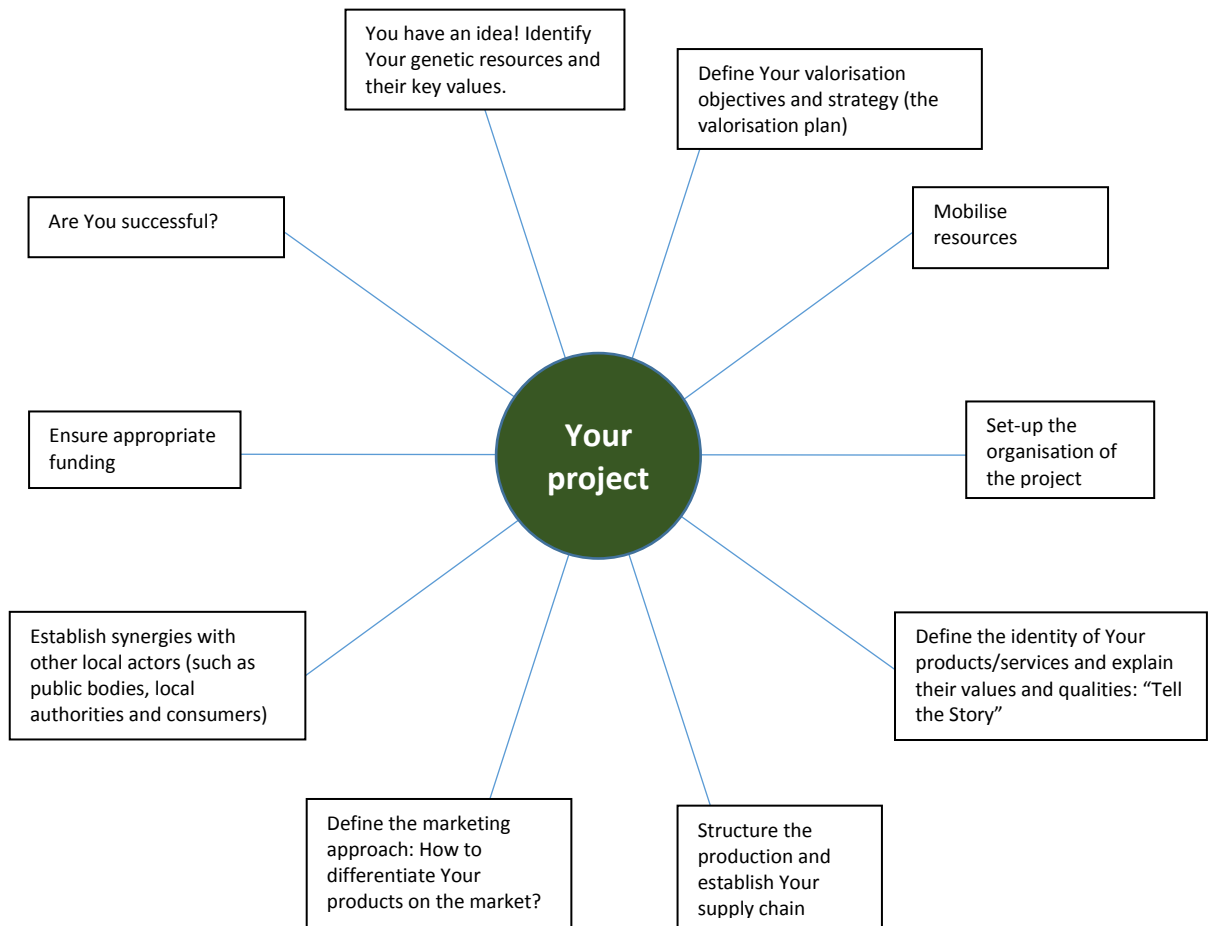
**Due to this complexity each valorisation project initiative needs to develop its own tailored approach. For endangered animal breeds and underutilised plant varieties there is a need for a specific user guide to support actors and producers involved in drawing up a valorisation strategy.**

**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:



These steps ideally follow a chronological order but in reality most of them are carried out at the same time, while moving at different speeds. The time required for each step is specific to each project.

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: <http://www.geneticresources.eu> for more information. The complete list of examples can be found on page 22.



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

Safeguarding endangered animal breeds and underutilised plant varieties requires specific valorisation strategies. In the one hand, mainstream conventional supply chains do 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. In the other hand, endangered breeds and underutilised varieties often have many different 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?**
- **Do you know, and have you taken into consideration all legislation applying to genetic resources?**

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 similar initiatives or projects.

**SUCCESS STORIES**

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 **Prestige Black pig** was abandoned in the 1990's and replaced by breeds with intense growth and high share of lean meat, but Prestige 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.

## ➤ 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. The group of “*promoters*”; often a small group of actors made up exclusively or jointly of producers, technicians, local institutions 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.

**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 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.

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.

These discussions should 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 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 such exchange should be a diagnosis of the initial situation that would include strengths; weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the future project.

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 regard 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.

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. The questioning of the group's objectives may be accompanied by a longer-term questioning of the protection of the resource: have we considered how to protect it so that it is not over-exploited or misused?

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.

## SUCCESS STORIES

Each of the four projects that were part of the preparatory action provides good practices on how to prepare a well-design approach that considers the local/regional socio-economic and environmental situation of each genetic resource. The four strategies and implementation plans<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

In **Denmark**, 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 document 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.

### ➤ 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

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<sup>2</sup> These documents are available at <http://www.geneticresources.eu>

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 spending 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 the inception of the project.

### SUCCESS STORIES

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 were organised locally to discuss with persons who were interested to join the initiative. These discussions allowed the identification of key persons that were needed in the project. This example, also, demonstrates that communication is of key importance: Your project should also include actors who are going to communicate outside the project 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 centres and schools).

### ➤ **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. 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 (but not be limited to) 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..

### SUCCESS STORIES

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.


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.

➤ **Define the identity of Your products/services and explain their values and qualities: “Tell 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 explain their qualities and characteristics, 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.

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- **Find the right language elements to tell the story of your breed/variety and pass it on to producers, who will be the first ambassadors of the product**
  - **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? How can you convey to the consumer the specificities of product preparation (storage, cooking ...)?**
  - **Keep in mind that each breed or variety is the result of various evolutions over time: the resource is not fixed but in a constant evolution. The users can describe and frame it but not block it.**

Neglected crops and rare breeds are anchored in a territory and are the results of the commitment and heritage of both a community of actors and, more in general, of a local society.

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.

## SUCCESS STORIES

Several projects succeeded in building 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.

### ➤ **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 cannot 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 of the supply chain 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.

### SUCCESS STORIES

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 considered 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.

### ➤ **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 to be served (what are consumers expecting?).

**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.

## SUCCESS STORIES

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.

### ➤ **Establish synergies with other local actors (such as public bodies, local 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.

## SUCCESS STORIES

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.

### ➤ 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 projects face 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?**

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.

## SUCCESS STORIES

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 Programmes. 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**).

*For contacts see, also: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/networking/nrn-profiles\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/networking/nrn-profiles_en).*

## ➤ **Are You successful?**

The valorisation process, involving several types 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 asking themselves:**



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

During the inception phase of the project (first 3-5 years), this analysis can be carried out using 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...). These indicators should be developed by the project members by using a participative approach.

When the project further develops, a context analysis should be performed on a regular basis (every 2-3 years). Such analysis, based on a set of unique indicators defined by and for the project, is instrumental for defining the valorisation strategy and should, also, be used to measure the progresses 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 modification of the project.

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.

## To Go Further...

### LEARN MORE ABOUT EU LEGISLATION AND INITIATIVES ON GENETIC RESOURCES

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The importance of plant and animal genetic resources is recognised by many policies and programmes, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2001), the Sustainable Development Goals (2015), FAO Global Plans of Action for Plant (2011) and Animal (2007) genetic resources, the EU Biodiversity Strategy (2011) and the Resolution on its mid-term review (2016).

The EU has also been addressing conservation, use and valorisation issues of genetic resources for food and agriculture in a series of legislations and activities, including:

- the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)<sup>3</sup>;
- the seed marketing directives including the conservation varieties Directive; and
- EU Regulation (EC) No 511/2014 implementing the Nagoya Protocol on access-benefit sharing (ABS).

Besides, there are various EU initiatives focusing on the conservation of agricultural biodiversity, including:

- GENRES programme: Council Regulation (EC) No 1467/1994 (known as GENRES) established a 5-year programme of funding for the conservation, characterisation, collection and utilisation of genetic resources in agriculture with a view to the establishment of the aims of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, to support and supplement the efforts made in the MS where current work appeared adequate. This first programme was adopted on November 1994 for a period of five years with a budget of around EUR 10 million. A new five-year programme was established on the legal basis of the Council Regulation (EC) No 870/2004 with a clear reference to multinational arrangements such as the CBD and FAO measures. Member States had to provide matching funds and develop national programmes to receive funding under this Regulation. The allocated budget was about EUR 10 million;
- European multi-annual Research Framework Programmes: a total of 31 projects have been funded to date under Horizon 2020 societal challenge 2 for a total EU contribution of EUR 179 million over the 2014-2020 period and the participation in selected projects of 434 partners. The key themes of these projects are: landraces and local products & value chains, gene bank management, coordination and development of biodiversity strategies, diversifying agriculture and forestry, plant and animal breeding. Many other parts of Horizon 2020 include interesting activities

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<sup>3</sup> Namely through the Rural Development Programmes (EAFRD)

on genetic resources and breeding such as Marie- Skłodowska Curie Actions. Several research infrastructures are also supported, like EMPHASIS-PREP on plant phenomics and the European Plant Phenotyping Network 2020. The European Research Council also finances a wealth of basic science projects in this area, such as CRISBREED on the use of CRISPR/CAS mediated plant breeding, while the SME Instrument supports many more applied projects, such as SWINE-GEN on Genetic markers assisted selection for improvement of swine breeding productivity. Finally, 8 new projects are planned to start under the 2017 and 2018 calls for a total funding of EUR 51 million; further funding opportunities amounting to a total of EUR 24 million are planned under the open calls for 2019-2020;

- Life + programme;
- The European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI) has run a Focus Group addressing cooperation models for genetic resources. Within the EIP-AGRI, 'operational groups' are supported via EAFRD funding (rural development) addressing issues related to genetic resources and breeding in innovative ways. Some examples such projects include: the management of small and local populations of old breeds of cattle and pigs with innovative techniques (Germany, 2015-2018); recovery, safeguard and characterization of local varieties with specific agronomic and organoleptic qualities, optimum management techniques and valorisation and marketing strategies (Italy, 2017-2020), and others. For more information see: [www.eip-agri.eu](http://www.eip-agri.eu)

For more information on EU-level R&I activities on genetic resources and breeding see: [http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/horizon2020/document.cfm?doc\\_id=51888](http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/horizon2020/document.cfm?doc_id=51888)

## SEARCH FOR MORE GOOD PRACTICES IN THE PREPARATORY ACTION

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Visit the file "***Find Good Examples in the E-Compendium***" and consult the compendium at <http://www.geneticresources.eu>.



## LIST OF EXAMPLES PER COUNTRY AND SPECIES

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All examples quoted in this user guide are taken from the four projects and from the e-compendium available at <http://www.geneticresources.eu>. The list below contains direct links to e-compendium for each project:

### ***Animal genetic resources:***

#### **Cattle**

- [Murboden cattle](#) (AU)
- [Pie Rouge de l'Est](#) (BE)
- [Limpurg ox](#) (DE)
- [Rotes Höhenvieh cattle](#) (DE)
- [Greek shorthorn cattle](#) (EL)
- [Greek buffalo](#) (EL)
- [Béarnaise cattle](#) (FR)
- [Bretonne Pie-Noir cattle](#) (FR)
- [Istrian cattle](#) (HR)
- [Hungarian Grey cattle](#) (HR)

#### **Goat, sheep**

- [Alpine stone sheep](#) (DE)
- [Estonian native sheep](#) (EE)
- [Malaga goat](#) (ES)
- [Finnsheep](#) (FI)
- [Boulonnais sheep](#) (FR)
- [Old Irish goat](#) (IE)
- [Altamura sheep](#) (IT)
- [Carpathian sheep](#) (PL)
- [Gute sheep](#) (SE)
- [Lanatura sheep](#) (SI)

#### **Swine, poultry, rabbit**

- [Prestic black-pied pig](#) (CZ)
- [White landrace rabbit](#) (DK)
- [Gascony hen](#) (FR)
- [Cul Noir du Limousin pig](#) (FR)
- [Turopolje pig](#) (HR)
- [Bisaro pig](#) (PT)
- [Bazna pig](#) (RO)

#### **Horses**

- [Connemara pony](#) (IE)
- [Ardennes drafthorse](#) (LU)

### ***Plant genetic resources:***

#### **Fruits**

- [Heilroom Leithaberg cherries](#) (AU)
- [Novafruits](#) (BE-FR)
- [Champagne bratbirne spumante pear](#) (DE)
- [Malvasia grapevine](#) (HR)
- [Heritage apple collection](#) (IE)
- [Antiche Mele Piemontesi apple](#) (IT)

#### **Cereals**

- [Agribio cereal products](#) (BE)
- [Einkorn wheat](#) (BG)
- [Ruzrok sorghum](#) (CZ)
- [North German Champagne rye](#) (DE)
- [Spiga Negra pasta](#) (ES)
- [Fogaina wheat](#) (ES)
- [Solina wheat](#) (IT)
- [Vaso maize](#) (PT)
- [Victorian barley beer](#) (UK)

#### **Vegetable**

- [Kurtovo Konare Pink tomatoes](#) (BG)
- [Filderkraut](#) (DE)
- [Tomatiga de Ramellet- tomatoes](#) (ES)
- [Potatoe Onion](#) (FI)
- [Conservatoire du Gout](#) (FR)
- [Cipolla Acquaviva Onion](#) (IT)
- [Fagiolo Gialet bean](#) (IT)
- [Patata Quarantina](#) (IT)
- [San Marzano tomatoes](#) (IT)
- [Smak family beans](#) (NL)
- [Rattvik pea](#) (SE)
- [Ledenka salad](#) (SI)

#### **Others**

- [Plantaromed](#) (ES)
- [Organisation Bretonne de Sélection](#) (FR)
- [Zeldzaam Lekker – Rare and Tasty](#) (NL)
- [Thyme Oregano](#) (RO)

## CONTACT LIST

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It is suggested that translators of this guide include a list of relevant contacts in their own country

- Ministry of Agriculture:
- Research centres or national institutes on Genetic Resources:
- NGOs and other associations:

## 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](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/external-studies_en)

**or**

[www.geneticresources.eu](http://www.geneticresources.eu)



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