



# National Report for Hungary: How to improve the production and the use of organic seeds? National recommendations for Hungary

**Work Package:** WP01 - Regulation & policy framework regarding production, use, and transparency of organic seed

**Dissemination level:** Public

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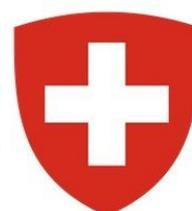
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**Local partners involved in the organisation of the workshop and the revision of the report:**  
Judit Fehér, Dóra Drexler (ÖMKi)

**WP Leader:** Freya Schaefer (FiBL-DE)



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## Recommendations to promote the production and use of organic seeds in Hungary

### 1. Background

This document presents the results of the workshop, held on 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2019 in Budapest, funded by LIVESEED<sup>1</sup> Horizon 2020 project. During the event, we presented and later discussed with the participants the country report, which was assembled during the project in 2017 through interviews (Annex IV). Additionally, good practices from Austria and the Czech Republic were presented. The program of the event is presented in the II. Annex and the list of participants in Annex III.

In the second part of the program, the participants discussed the feasibility of Hungarian adaptation of European best practices proposals included in the LIVESEED project booklet<sup>2</sup>, as well as other opportunities for development.

### 2. Discussion about the Hungarian organic seed production and use

The participants highlighted the following points that could be considered in general as advantages:

- high quality seed, able to meet the criteria of cultivation contracts
- high demand for Hungarian seed abroad
- extremely valuable environmental conditions, good soil quality
- conventional variety assortment is very diverse (excellent genetic basis)
- GMO free country
- high technological standards
- compliance with internationally recognized or international certification systems

However, according to the 2017 country report, there is room for improvement in the following areas:

- the market share of organic seeds in Hungary should be increased and the benefits of organic seeds should be widely demonstrated to farmers;
- the organisation of a consultation platform with organic seed producers for a common market-development;
- organic seed production needs to be stabilized and a constant market demand and supply must be generated;
- motivational tools should be developed to expand the assortment of organic seed and promote the use of organic seed;
- more attention should be addressed to farm-saved seeds, as both their quantity (in case of cereals it can reach 80% on basis of area) and their quality affect the overall picture. Trainings for farmers are essential to improve seed quality;
- processors should be more closely involved in dialogues, as they often determinate the needs, the varieties produced;
- CMS (cytoplasmic male sterility) hybrids (not only vegetables, but also sunflower, sorghum, rapeseed) should be prevented, as their use does not meet the principles of organic farming;

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<sup>1</sup> Liveseed.eu

<sup>2</sup> Booklet on How to implement the organic regulation to increase production & use of organic seed – Policy Recommendations for national and authorities (2018) <https://www.liveseed.eu/liveseed-finalv2-webinteractive-1/>



- data on regional variety use of farmers should be collected and summarized (variety, t/ha, quality);
- the higher prices of organic seeds should be offset by an improved performance in organic farming;
- it would be important to carry out official post-registration tests also under organic circumstances (NÉBIH - National Food Safety Authority);
- closer co-operation is recommended for arable field trials, especially in case of on-farm trials;
- there is a need for further organic breeding programs such as the Martonvásár cereal breeding program. In addition, participatory breeding programs can provide an alternative cost-effective solution.

### 3. SWOT analysis – Detailed analysis of domestic opportunities based on presentations and group-work

#### 3.1. Subsidy system

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• applicants committed to organic agriculture can earn extra points (so their application is more likely to win), when applying for an investment in seed production;</li> <li>• in the case of land purchase/lease, there is a double advantage for the organic seed producer;</li> <li>• support for organic farming is generally positive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organic seed production on its own is not a subsidized item (only organic farming);</li> <li>• in the case of land purchase/lease, the seed multiplication contract and the actual seed production must be proven for at least 6 out of the 10 years;</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organic seed multiplication, as an independently subsidized category should be established</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ....</li> </ul>

#### 3.2. Derogation rules, national annex

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By Regulation (EC) No 889/2008, Hungary complies with EU standards, providing for different categories of derogations at legislative level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Category I: no possibility for derogation. Although it exists in Annex X of the regulation 889/2008, the list is empty;</li> <li>• Category II: Individual derogation. Each case must be assessed individually - Administrative overload.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• III. Category: General derogation: does not exist in Hungary, although it could</li> <li>• An expert group of the sector could work on the lists and start to eliminate derogations</li> <li>• Deadlines for buying (pre-ordering) certain crops should be set</li> <li>• Where there is a supply, the derogation should be abolished</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Derogation is available for all species;</li> <li>• Casual legislative changes in the country</li> </ul>

#### 3.3. Database



STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organic seed database is available, maintained by NÉBIH (by law)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The database is hardly used (neither seed producers nor farmers use it);</li> <li>Limited number of species/varieties are available in organic;</li> <li>It's use gives more frustration than opportunity for farmers (they use only if it's unavoidable);</li> <li>It's not up to date, updated approx. every six months</li> <li>Not available on platforms used by young organic farmers (e.g. mobile app);</li> <li>The farmers sell and buy seed between themselves, without registering in the database, which makes the seed database unsuitable for statistics or for drawing conclusions.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is openness and there are real opportunities to involve other databases and to develop together with stakeholders: NÉBIH, NÖDIK, breeders, control authorities, seed producers, distributors, processors, farmers;</li> <li>Generational changes must be taken into account, easier accessibility, platform expansion (e.g. mobile application, more interactivity);</li> <li>Introduction of additional information: variety assortment, variety description, yield and quality description based on real biennial testing (VCU), alternative varieties within regions, price, packaging, availability (when and where available), specific indication of landraces;</li> <li>Function extensions: listing, filtering, searching, grouping depending on the processors' needs, opportunity for data exportation;</li> <li>Merging with other databases: VIGOR, official data on controlled areas;</li> <li>Distributors attention should be called more on organic seed;</li> <li>The database must be upgraded to "real-time update" mode.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The role of the national database will remain inferior until it shows real supply and demand;</li> <li>As long as the database is not functional, policy frameworks cannot be developed;</li> <li>Until the benefits of a database aren't seen by those involved, its use will be avoided.</li> </ul>

### 3.4. Training opportunities

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High professional skills of educational and research institutes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of organization and professional coordination.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There would be a need for extensive seed database training;</li> <li>Participatory breeding training would be needed, and in particular a farmer training course to improve the quality of farm-saved seeds;</li> <li>Variety exhibition with trainings could demonstrate why is it worth to buy organic varieties, organic seed instead of conventional untreated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no source to cover the costs.</li> </ul>

### 3.5. Access to cleaning equipment for organic seed producers



STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• .....</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• .....</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve the quality of farm-saved seeds, trainings and seed cleaning equipment are needed.</li> <li>• Purchase of small-scale seed cleaning equipment for common use should be supported or subsidized.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• .....</li> </ul>

### 3.6. Organic breeding and variety test

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organically bred varieties generally perform better in organic farming.</li> <li>• At Martonvásár for 15 years they have been working to increase diversity: pre-breeding (wild species, landraces), composite populations, targeted wheat breeding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practically one Hungarian organic breeding program for cereals (einkorn, emmer, wheat, spelt, durum) (at Martonvásár)</li> <li>• There is a need to test more varieties at multiple locations;</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of breeding/testing programs for regional variety recommendations;</li> <li>• Provide transition between state/individual/community/participatory breeding programs;</li> <li>• Systematic testing of varieties in the national catalog</li> <li>• Encourage international cooperation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of CMS hybrids (not only vegetables but sunflower, sorghum, rapeseed);</li> <li>• The danger of GMOs and new breeding techniques penetrating to a so far GMO free country</li> </ul>

### 3.7. Expert roundtable

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Properly trained, enthusiastic professionals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of coordination.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Organic seed expert group” can gather and share sector-specific knowledge with the industry - there is a need for it;</li> <li>• Can coordinate market needs with producers;</li> <li>• Can assist competent authorities in development of financial resources for variety testing and conciliation in change of legislation;</li> <li>• Make “recommendation lists” based on experience, statistics on variety usage for different regions, markets, production intensities;</li> <li>• Coordinate derogations, establishing and maintaining derogations categories and lists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ...</li> </ul>

### 3.8. Traditional varieties and farm-saved seeds for own use

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers have a wealth of knowledge;</li> <li>• The use of farm-saved seeds is very significant in the sector as it is accepted as organic seed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not appearing on the market - unique situation in Europe is that some organic farmers do not appear on the market at all, producing only for friends, families, thinking in community systems and operating in an informal market)</li> <li>• They are not certified or tested</li> <li>• Knowledge carriers are not identified</li> </ul>



OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizing species-specific online trainings, seed roadshows for farmers;</li> <li>Identification of knowledge carriers, assessment of knowledge base;</li> <li>Development of protocols for small-scale seed production;</li> <li>Development of a system for farm-saved seeds similar to the controlled seed production system, especially for heterogeneous material, as NÉBIH cannot handle that</li> <li>Development of participatory breeding of heterogeneous propagation material.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not organised.</li> <li>Reduce seed infection sources: hot water treatment, storage solutions to prevent pests;</li> <li>The health of seeds exchanged between farmers is unknown – danger of transmission of disease.</li> </ul>

#### 4. Policy changes proposed based on the Organic Regulation

- Sharing knowledge, data sets accumulated by different stakeholders in the sector to obtain a more realistic picture of availability and use of organic seeds, based on these proposing appropriate policy objectives and support schemes for legislators;
- Improvement of sectoral communication, coordination, regularization, involvement of all stakeholders in the sector, involvement of members of the seed product council - mainly production and marketing of arable crop seeds;
- Overview of the derogation categories, development of the list in Annex X of regulation 889/2008;
- Reduction of certain administrative burdens: e.g. no GMO-free declarations;
- Close cooperation between seed producers and organic farmers, the establishment of a sectoral round table to develop a variety assortment and better organization of market demand;
- Notable development of the Hungarian seed database, promoting cooperation with the planned European router database;
- Increasing the quality of domestic seed sales platforms (webshops) and regulating or standardizing their criteria (more knowledge, descriptions, etc.);
- Government-organized contracted organic seed production or closed contractual schemes to increase organic seed production;
- Sharing financial risk of production through policy tools;
- Promote the launch of organic post-registration variety testing.

### Annex I: Declaration of Organic Seed Hungary

English Translation (please see original declaration in Hungarian below):

- ÖMKi and MTA ATK will continue their on-farm tests, and MTA ATK will organise together with ÖMKi a field day for the stakeholders of arable crop value chain.
- ÖMKi will coordinate the consultation between seed producers.
- Öko-Garancia and Biokontroll Hungária will process the data collected on variety use and/or certification results, Anna Divéky Ertsey will look for students for this task.
- Szent István University, Horticulture Faculty, Anna Divéky Ertsey will launch a farmer training from January 2020.
- Freya Schafer will send the methodology of the German data analysis.



- Anett Fekete will share the information available on EIP Agri portal.
- Tibor Kruppi, representative of Tradisco Seeds and the Hungarian Seed Association will share the summary of the workshop to the seed producers.



## NYILATKOZAT ÖKOLÓGIAI VETŐMAGOKRÓL

BUDAPEST, 2019. MÁRCIUS 12.

Mi, a LIVESEED műhelymunka résztvevői, szeretnénk az ökológiai vetőmagok előállítását és használatát előmozdítani Magyarországon. Ezért az alábbiakat fogjuk tenni a következő egy év során:

Az ÖMKI és MTA ATK vállalja, hogy folytatja az on-farm tesztjeit, és az MTA ATK vállalja, hogy az ÖMKI-vel közösen szántóföldi napot rendez a szántóföldi növények értékláncának érintettjei számára.

Az ÖMKI vállalja az ökovetőmag-előállítók közötti egyeztetést

Az ÖKO-garancia és a Biokontroll Hungária vállalja a fajtahasználatról szóló reprezentatív felméréseinek, és/vagy meglévő fémzáróási eredmények, jegzőkönyvek feldolgozását, és Divéky Ertsey Anna vállalja, hogy diákat keres erre a feladatra.

SZIE Kertész Karon Divéky Ertsey Anna vállalja, hogy januártól gazdatovábbképzés elindítja.

Freya Schaefer vállalja, hogy methodológiát küld a Németországban használt adatelemzésről.

Fekete Anett vállalja, hogy EIP AGRÍ hazai portálán lévő információkat széleskörűen terjeszti.

Kruppi Tibor a Tradisco Seeds képviseletében és a és a

Vetőmagszövetség vállalja, hogy a LIVESEED workshop

összefoglalóját megküldi a többi ökovetőmag-előállítónak.



Jelen projektet az Európai Unió Horizont 2020 Kutatási és Innovációs Keretprogramja támogatja a 727230 számú támogatási szerződés alapján.



LIVESEED is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 under grant agreement No 727230 and by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) under contract number 17.00090.



Budapest, 2019. március 12.

Aláírás:

W. Patai (KORNER)  
Dániel Dóc (ÖNKÖ)  
Bécsi Ágoston (CAH)  
Dóczy Ágoston (SZIE)  
Kovács Péter (Biocontrol)  
Bárányos Péter (ÖNKÖ)  
Füredi Csaba (ÖNKÖ)  
Tóth Péter (ÖNKÖ)

 (Előny Kft.)

 KEMPI T. BÉLA RADISCO SEEDS KFT.



Jelen projektet az Európai Unió Horizont 2020 Kutatási és Innovációs Keretprogramja támogatja a 727230 számú támogatási szerződés alapján.

Attila Lengyel



## Annex II. Workshop Agenda

# Organic Seed in Hungary: How to increase the production and use?

Budapest, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Impact Hub, Ferenciek tere 2, Budapest

Chair: Judit Fehér (ÖMKi)	
Program	
9:00 – 9:30	<i>Registration and coffee</i>
9:30 – 9:40	<b>Welcome and Opening</b>
9:40 – 10:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short explanation of the aim of the LIVESEED workshop – <i>Ágnes Bruszik (IFOAM EU)</i></li> <li>• EU legal framework – <i>Eric Gall (IFOAM EU)</i></li> <li>• Explanation of the Router database – <i>Freya Schaefer (FiBL)</i></li> </ul>
10:25 – 10:45	<b>Organic seed production and use – results of the first national visit in the frame of the LIVESEED project-</b> <i>Dóra Drexler (ÖMKi)</i>
10:45 – 11:20	<b>Testimonials from other stakeholders:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Certification bodies</b> - <i>Katalin Allacherné Szépkuthy (Ökogarancia) and Hajnalka Homoki (Biokontroll)</i></li> <li>• <b>Seed company</b> - <i>Kruppi Tibor (Tradisco Seeds)</i></li> <li>• <b>Organic farmer</b> <i>Zoltán Dezsény (MagosVölgy Ökogazdaság), Mihály Földi (ÖMKi-on farm network)</i></li> <li>• <b>Breeder</b> (<i>Péter Mikó</i>)</li> </ul>
11:20 – 11:40	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:40 – 12:10	<b>Good examples from neighbourhood countries</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Vladimíra Horáková (UKZUZ, Czech Republic),</i></li> <li>• <i>Reinhild Frech-Emmelmann (ReinSaat, Austria)</i></li> </ul>
12:10 – 13:10	<i>Lunchbreak</i>
13:10 – 13:20	<b>Introduction to group work</b> ( <i>Fehér Judit (ÖMKi)</i> )
13:20 – 15:10	<b>Group work (World Café)- in 3 groups</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Incentives for organic seed database use?</b> (<i>moderator: Agnes Bruszik (IFOAM EU)</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Organic seed: is it really better or just more expensive? How can we test and demonstrate the potential of organic varieties</b> (<i>moderator: Drexler Dóra ÖMKi</i>)</li> <li>• <b>How to improve farm-saved seed quality?</b> (<i>moderator: Balázs Bálint (ESSRG)</i>)</li> </ul>
15:10 – 15:40	<i>Coffee break</i>
15:40 – 16:30	<b>Plenary session</b>



Summaries from working group moderators, presentation of the Seed declarations  
Conclusions and follow up

### Annex III. Participants of the Workshop

Allacherné Szépkuthy	Katalin	Hungária Öko Garancia Kft
Apostol	Emília	Vetőmag Szövetség
Bakos	Péter Kenéz	Elitmag Kft. (Marton Genetics)
Balázs	Bálint	ESSRG
Bencze	Szilvia	ÖMKi
Borbélyné Hunyadi	Éva	ÖMKi
Bruszík	Ágnes	IFOAM EU
Cseuz	László	Gabonakutató Nonprofit Kft.
Dezsény	Zoltán	MagosVölgy Ökológiai Gazdaság
Divéky-Ertsey	Anna	SZIE
Drexler	Dóra	ÖMKi
Ducretot	Jade	ÖMKi
Fehér	Judit	ÖMKi
Fekete	Anett	Agrárminisztérium
Földi	Mihály	ÖMKi
Frech-Emmelmann	Reinhild	ReinSaat KG
Gall	Eric	IFOAM EU
Gönczi	Krisztina	Portfólió/Agrárszektor
Hayes	Matthew	Zsámboki Biokert
Hegyesi	József	Növényi Diverzitás Központ
Hoch	István	Etalon Vetőmag Kft.
Homoki	Hajnalka	Biokontroll Hungária Nonprofit Kft.
Horáková	Vladimíra	ÚKZÚZ
Károlyi	Gyula	NÉBIH MGEI NIO
Kruppi	Tibor	Tradisco Seeds Kft.
Mikó	Péter	MTA ATK
Nuijten	Laurens	Bionext
Schaefer	Freya	FiBL
Szlatényi	Dóra	Magyar Biokultúra Szövetség
Szócs	Attila	Magyar Mezőgazdaság hetilap
Tóth	Beáta	NAIK
Tóth	Ferenc	NÉBIH MGEI VFO



## Annex IV. Country Report for Hungary



## Country Report for Hungary

**Work Package:** WP01 - Regulation & policy framework regarding production, use, and transparency of organic seed

**Dissemination level:** Public

**Publication Date:** 28 February 2019

**Main Author:** Maaïke Raaijmakers (Bionext, Netherlands)

**Local partner involved in the visit and the revision of the report:** ÖMKI

**WP Leader:** Freya Schaefer (FiBL-DE)

### About the report



LIVESEED is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 under grant agreement No 727230 and by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) under contract number 17.00090.



This report has been produced in the framework of the Horizon 2020-funded project LIVESEED.<sup>3</sup> The main aim of LIVESEED is to boost the production and use of organic seeds and plant breeding for organic agriculture across Europe. It is co-ordinated by IFOAM EU, and its scientific coordinator is FiBL-CH.

Work Package 01 of LIVESEED explores EU Member States in terms of their implementation and best practices connected to the EU Organic Regulations, in the contexts of national regulatory and policy frameworks, specifically regarding the production, use, and transparency of organic seed.

As part of this Work Package, Bionext, FiBL-DE and IFOAM EU visited selected countries during 2017-2018, where the organic seed production is low, to understand their bottlenecks and possibilities for improvements regarding the production and the use of organic seeds at the national level. During the visits, several stakeholder groups were interviewed (competent authorities, seed database managers, seed companies, research institutions, organic farmers, seed associations, organic certifiers, etc) in each country.

The main outcomes of the visits were summarized in country reports presenting the status quo for that given Member State. The reports' findings then were disseminated among a wide range of national stakeholders in 2019 and discussed during workshops to define viable next steps to improve the status quo in each country. The Workshop for Hungary took place on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019, in Budapest, and was co-organised by our LIVESEED project partner Ökológiai Mezőgazdasági Kutatóintézet (ÖMKi).

This country report is recommended for national policymakers, and all stakeholders involved in the production and use of organic seed: national authorities, farmers, certifiers, producers, retailers, seed authorities, researchers and the civil society in general.

For further information concerning this report, please contact:

Ms. Maaike Raaijmakers: [raaijmakers@bionext.nl](mailto:raaijmakers@bionext.nl)

Bionext is the Dutch chain organization for organic agriculture and food.

For further information concerning the LIVESEED project, please contact:

IFOAM EU Group

Bram Moeskops: [bram.moeskops@ifoam-eu.org](mailto:bram.moeskops@ifoam-eu.org)

Visit our website: [liveseed.eu](http://liveseed.eu), and our social media: Facebook and Twitter: LIVESEEDeu

LIVESEED has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 727230 and by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) under contract number 17.00090. The information provided reflects the views of the authors. Neither the Research Executive Agency nor SERI is responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://liveseed.eu>



## Implementation of the regulation on organic seed

### Findings from the national visit to Hungary 21-24 November 2017

#### 1. General information

There are 3,414 organic farmers in Hungary covering 4 % (=186,000 hectare) of the agricultural land area. From this area 56,3 % is grassland, 39,3% is covered with arable crops and 4,4% are permanent crops. Source: IFOAM EU 2016

#### 2. Production and use of organic seed

The Hungarian Seed Association (Vetőmag Szövetség) has around 800 members. Membership of this association is obligatory if you want to sell seeds in Hungary. Over 400 members are seed companies, around 160 are farmers and the rest are seed trading companies. The seed companies are mainly Hungarian companies that produce for the Hungarian market.

According to the organic certifier Biokontroll Hungária, there are between 30 and 40 certified organic seed producers in Hungary. Farmers and research institutes are the main providers of organic seed. The farmers multiply the basic seed and the cleaning is done by subcontractors. Still there is very little certified organic seed on the Hungarian market. Organic seed companies do not necessarily produce organic seed every year, production depends on the demand. Often organic seeds are produced on a contractual basis, and seeds are certified and sold abroad. There is also a lot of farm saved seed used in Hungary. Organic farmers may re-use their own seed, and this is accepted as organic seed by the law.

#### 3. Implementation of the EU regulation: the database and derogation policy

The National Food Chain Safety Office (NÉBIH) is responsible for the management of the organic seed database. To enter seed on the database, seed suppliers fill in a registration form, which contains relevant information about the supplier, organic seed species, variety, amount of seed, lot number, availability, etc. NÉBIH receives information from the suppliers if stocks are no longer available and keeps the database up to date.

The amount of seed lots and suppliers on the database differs per year. In 2017, one company offered organic vegetable seeds of 25 varieties on the database. In addition, one fodder pea and three fodder maize varieties were offered on the database.

Not all organic seed is on the database. Organic farmers can find and sell organic seed outside the database through direct sale. If they have already a buyer for their seed, they do not put it on the database anymore. Farmers do not see the purpose of selling seed via the database. If it is on the database there is a risk of not selling their organic seed.

Farmers can get a derogation if no organic seeds are available on the database from a variety that they wish to grow. Derogations are granted by the certification bodies (Biokontroll Hungária Nonprofit Kft. or Hungária Öko Garancia) who report to the competent authority (NÉBIH).



#### 4. Policy measures to increase production and use of organic seed

Members to the Seed Association receive the organic certification (from Biokontroll Hungária) free of charge.

#### 5. Breeding research and field trials

The Agricultural Institute, Centre for Agricultural Research, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA ATK) has an organic plant breeding programme in cereals. They produce organic einkorn and emmer varieties. They produce pre-basic and basic seeds and sell them to seed companies or farmers that produce seeds. For spelt and wheat this is organized by the company Elitmag (<https://elitmag.hu>) which was established by MTA ATK and also owned in majority. They only produce organic seed if the farmers order in advance.

There is also a Potato Research Institute in Keszthely, part of the Pannon University. This Institute has a broad range of conventional resistant varieties, which can be suitable for organic cultivation as well. There are no official organic field trials in Hungary but the Hungarian Research Centre for Organic Agriculture (ÖMKI) conducts on-farm trials to test the performance of winter wheat varieties under organic conditions.

#### 6. Constraints and opportunities

There is no market demand for organic seeds, and therefore, there is no economic incentive to produce organic seed for the Hungarian market.

The organic seed database does not function very well. Most seeds are now sold through direct sales from farmer to farmer. If one puts their seed on the database it might not be sold.

Organic seed production has a high risk. It is difficult for farmers to reach the quality standards needed for certification.

The varieties which are multiplied under organic conditions do not always meet the demand of the organic farmer. There are more than 300 wheat varieties available in Hungary; but only 3 of them are on the organic seed database. So, the choice on the database is very limited for the farmers.

The price of organic seed is a bottleneck. The price difference with conventional seed is on average 50%.

There is not enough untreated conventional seed on the market either. Farmers must order their untreated seed in advance. Some seed companies refuse to sell untreated seed; in their opinion the public law it is obligating them to treat the seed.

An opportunity is a contract between MTA ATK and the company Naturgold. Naturgold sells the organic seeds to farmers and buys back the product they produce. This reduces the financial risk for the farmers. This example, using a closed contracting system, could be applied to other crops and companies and would increase the organic seed use in Hungary.

Another opportunity is the fact that all stakeholders, including the Ministry of Agriculture, acknowledge the importance of organic variety trials and want to cooperate to realize this.

#### 7. Recommendations from the stakeholders

- To create a market for organic seeds, the higher costs of the seed must be compensated by a better performance of the variety.



- To find out which varieties are most suitable for organic production, and therefore are performing better, organic variety trials must be organized.
- It should be compulsory in the organic report (made by farmers annually) to mention the name of the varieties used, and not only the species. Currently 95% of varieties reported by organic farmers to the control bodies are listed as unknown.
- An expert group for organic seed could boost the organic seed sector gathering and distributing the knowledge in the sector.
- To improve the quality of farm saved seed, farmers need training and seed cleaning facilities.

## 8. More information

Organic seed database: <http://portal.nebih.gov.hu/oko-vetomag>

Biokultura: [www.gfar.net/organizations/hungarian-association-organic-farmers-biokultura](http://www.gfar.net/organizations/hungarian-association-organic-farmers-biokultura)

ÖMKi: <https://biokutatas.hu/about-us/>

MTA-ATK: [www.mta-atk.hu](http://www.mta-atk.hu)

