



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

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

Dissemination level: Public

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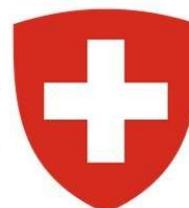
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Background

This document presents the results of a national workshop, held on 19th of June 2019 in Fundulea, Romania, as part of the Horizon 2020 funded project LIVESEED¹. It aims at presenting specific policy recommendations for Romania, on how to improve the production and the use of organic seeds in the country. At the event, around 30 different stakeholders, representatives of authorities in charge of organic agriculture, certifiers, seeds companies, researchers and organic farmers and breeders gathered to discuss their views on the subject.

In the first part of the event, the project team presented and later discussed with the participants the country report for Romania (Annex IV) and a brochure with best practices the implementation of the organic regulations across Europe², which was assembled to present the results of a country visit that took place in 2018 as part of the LIVESEED project, exploring through interviews with selected stakeholders the current implementation of the EU organic regulations concerning organic seed production and use in Romania.

In the second part of the program, the participants were separated into three groups to exchange views on how to facilitate cooperation, and other ways to increase production and use of organic seed in Romania in more detail. The discussions were guided by these three following questions:

- How to improve the organic seed database?
- How to increase production and use of organic seed in Romania?
- How to improve the communication and cooperation between the stakeholders in Romania?

The full program of the event is given in Annex II. The discussions led to smaller commitments taken up by the participants towards the improvement of the situation on organic seed, summarized in a Declaration of Organic Seed (Annex I).

This national report is an internal working document aimed at national policymakers and all stakeholders involved in the production and use of organic seed.

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1. Reflections on the Romanian organic seed production and use

Based on presentations from the authorities, and testimonials from certifiers, researchers, seed producers and farmers, as well as the discussions and comments from the workshop participants, since the country visit in 2018, organic seed production has not changed significantly in Romania, despite the country's tremendous potential in organic farming: only 2% of total agricultural land is used for organic agriculture. The number of farms producing organic seeds is also still limited, only a few companies offer organic seed in Romania, and only 12 providers present certified organic seed in the national database. Organic seed is particularly limited for vegetables in the Romanian market. If

¹ [Liveseed.eu](http://liveseed.eu)

² <https://www.liveseed.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/LIVESEED-FinalV2-WebInteractive-1.pdf>



the seed availability stays this low, phasing out of derogation by 2036 will not be possible. Currently, more than 90% of seed used in organic are authorised derogations.

2.1. In general, the main problems around organic seed in Romania are perceived by stakeholders as:

- Much higher price than conventional non-treated seed;
- Lack of market demand from farmers, though the phasing-out of the derogations will create demand over time, as well as would organic seed that provide higher yields, or comes with lower prices;
- Some seed are only available from foreign sources in appropriate quality and quantity (e.g. sunflower, barley), but foreign suppliers need a registered branch in the country, which limits the access to seed;
- Too many varieties are needed in the country to suit the different pedo-climatic conditions;
- The production of organic seed and organic breeding is difficult and takes a long time, which hinders co-ordination of supply and demand;
- There is a lack of co-ordinated efforts in the country to tackle some aspects around seed together with stakeholders, particularly around derogations, around farmed saved seeds and their health, including phytosanitary requirements, around the upcoming organic heterogenous materials, and around contamination issues of untreated seed;
- Lack of communication at the national level to farmers on the new EU Organic Regulation, on the national database, and the phase-out of the derogations;
- Rules and regulations in Romania should take into account small scale family production and provide protection of the right of the farmer and the access of the peasant to seed;

2.2 Improving the *availability* of organic seed could be approached by:

- Subsidizing/compensating the higher production costs of organic seed;
- Motivating the producers with better income/price;
- Improving the database to facilitate transparency on the availability of organic seed;
- Protecting rights connected to the seeds of Organic Heterogenous Material - which has recently started to be widely produced in Romania and Moldova – and peasant seed, and their seed certification must be addressed;
- Developing and applying the correct phytosanitary rules with researchers and authorities for farm saved seeds, which could then be exchanged and sold;
- Fostering/subsidizing regular cooperation between seed producers and research institutions to tackle seed health issues through participatory/cooperative breeding and research on seed health and seed borne diseases;
- Co-ordinating efforts in anticipating demand and adjusting supply, developing a national organic seed production plan by a stakeholder body, involving farmers, researchers, authorities and traders/suppliers, including developing details for specific crops (wheat, spelt) and other crops where organic farmers could multiply seeds;
- Co-ordinating the gradual limitation of derogations with stakeholders;
- Subsidizing tools and equipment required for seed production, in particular the setup or running of seed cleaning facilities;
- Looking at the certification systems and alternatives to registering and certifying new varieties (e.g. and suitable local varieties) other than being based on UPOV criteria for some specific crops, and involving certifications from private standards for organic (e.g. Donabio)
- Providing regular training/counselling for organic seed producers;
- Improving communication flow and access of seed between research institutions and seed multipliers;



- Organizing meetings between the owners of a variety and those that would like to produce it;
- Setting up national seed production targets per crops (X amount of seed to be produced a year by a given deadline);
- Setting up regional cooperatives for seed production;
- Dedicating more land for research for seed production, for organic production and organic inputs, etc.;
- Setting up European farmer's knowledge exchange networks in seed production;
- Shortening to the timeframes for obtaining derogations;
- Promoting group certifications to reduce costs of producers;

2.3 Improving the *use of organic seed* could be approached by:

- Promoting the additional benefits of using organic seeds versus conventional untreated seeds, large scale farmers' education;
- Motivating the farmers by better quality (more disease resistant) and higher yielding organic seed, and/or by widening the seed choice range;
- Improving communication between farmers and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in general;
- Raising the interest of farmers in a given variety to a scale of economy where research institutions can engage in participatory breeding and testing in organic fields;
- Facilitating knowledge sharing amongst farmers on traditional seed production, on farm saved seed hygiene and seed saving methods, and on the certification and registration of new varieties in general;
- New initiatives, such as the set-up of a community seed bank in Bucharest, in cooperation with Arche Noah provides new forces in the country to play the role of coordination in some aspects, e.g. the "House of seeds" is also trying to set up a database on organic heterogeneous material;
- Improving the conditions of derogations.

2.4 Improving the communication and cooperation between the stakeholders in Romania could be approached by:

- Organising regular wider stakeholder workshops, paying attention to the fact that for foreign certifiers and for small farmers regular meetings are difficult (consideration of digital tools to attend remotely and contribute (web-streaming, social media to interact, etc.);
- Running a consultation with all stakeholders (including peasants and suppliers, traders, processors) with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on the new database and its implementation, as well as involving stakeholders in consultations between the Ministry and the representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture to Brussels;
- Improving the database to become a central tool for communication;
- Creating a seed producer forum that prepares a strategy, and involve small-scale farmers, not only large-scale farmers, in developing a common understanding of the purpose of the database with stakeholders (exchange of seeds through it versus administration of what is available for reporting purposes);
- Involving each other in already working interest groups and works (e.g. Tulcea farmers' meetings, international seed producers' platforms, scientific novelties should be shared through sharing Research Gate information of researchers, and the manual on organic seed production by Dr. Toncea should be widely disseminated);

2.5 The organic seed database and its use could be improved by:



- Developing a common understanding of the purpose of the database with stakeholders (exchange of seeds through it versus administration of what is available for reporting purposes);
- Developing a fully functional, user-friendly, editable, updateable, real time database that allows easy use by both suppliers and farmers next to certification bodies (a kind of seed exchange interface where you can see what seed farmers have in stock and what they are selling);
- The system set up should make it simpler for seed suppliers to sell their seeds through the database, than through direct sales to farmers;
- Involving organic heterogeneous materials (OHM) in the database and taking the new EU Organic Regulations into account: this would be an important showcase to farmers, who would need to be certified to sell under OHM;
- Providing extensive training for and consultation with stakeholders (incl. famers) on the database³;
- Reducing the time for seed suppliers to submit their offer on the database (currently they need to fill in an annex A with their supply and submit it to the regional competent authority);
- Providing a prime contact at the Ministry to send technical recommendations for the database on an ongoing basis;
- Considering access of neighbouring countries or countries with similar pedo-climatic conditions to access the database and the ability of offer their seeds;
- Providing region-specific information on the database would be interesting for farmers.

2. 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"> • Subsidy exists in the form of a national program for rural development. The program’s specific measure for organic agriculture (No. 11.) supports conversion to organic agriculture (sub-measure 11.1) and organic farmers (sub-measure 11.2). The latter contains 6 different packages for arable crops, vegetables, orchards, vinery medicinal plants, permanent grasslands; • Further measures not specific for organic agriculture also offer opportunities for organic seeds and organic production, e.g. Measure No. 09 aids for establishing producers’ groups and groups of organic seed producers; • Subsidies from the Ministry of Research support furthermore the creation of clusters of farmers’ groups (e.g. cluster Biodanubius) where they are producing and promoting organic products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of seed production available to subsidize the system for organic seed, lack of factors to develop and model subsidies for use of seed; • Lack of specific measures to promote organic seeds; • Direct payments exclude small farms (min. surface is 1 ha for arable crops with plots larger than 0,3 ha); • to receive a coupled aid for certain crop types a minimum quantity of production of certified seed is required, which in some cases exceeds what is organically feasible • Rules for other measures may interact negatively with organic principles: e.g. measure 10 package 5 – adaptation on the effects of climate changes there is a limited list of crops and are accepted only official varieties (corn, soybean, sunflower, sorghum); • To obtain coupled aid, certified seeds are required, however, it is requested for farmers to produce a minimum quantity of certified seed or consumption which is often difficult to achieve under organic conditions.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

³ See the example of Italy, where a national level training and consultation is organised on the new seed database on 19th September 2019, organised by Rete Semirurali on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other subsidy measures, that are not specifically allocated to organic farming could be made use of (e.g. measure 09: Aid for establishing producer groups); • Subsidies could be extended to support purchase of equipment needed for organic seed production (e.g. cleaning or set up facilities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding for financial support of organic seed production and to subsidize the purchase of organic seeds; • The implementation is supporting industrial large farming – the peasants doesn't get the subsidies; • Mandatory registration of lands online supports indirect data grabbers and land grabbers.
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3.2. Derogation rules, national annex

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To obtain derogation, the unavailability of the variety must be proven. The demand of derogation must be requested 3 months prior the use. Untreated conventional seeds cannot be used before the Certification body has checked the available offer and before getting the derogation authorized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romania does not comply with EU standards, by Regulation (EC) No 889/2008, providing for different categories of derogations at legislative level; • Proof of unavailability of organic seed through written declaration of 2 to 3 seed suppliers, which makes it easy to obtain derogations and is discouraging to use organic seed; • Mistrust between stakeholders leads to their refusal of introducing category 1; • Decertification due to residues of chemicals on untreated conventional seed (from authorised derogation); • The level of bureaucracy connected to the derogations is not adapted for small producers; • The deadline for seed suppliers to place seed on the database does not match the process of seed cleaning and registration, this needs to be synchronized better.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An expert group consisting of researchers, authorities, certifiers and seed producers could establish a list of crops for which enough organic seeds are available and derogations are rejected; • Deadlines for buying (pre-ordering) certain varieties should be established; • The deadline of three months for derogation request could be shortened to 2 month or 1.5 month; • A list specific to organic heterogeneous materials should be established. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derogation is available for all species; no general derogation list; • After granting derogations, sometimes contamination residues are still found despite the seed was not treated. This problem needs to be addressed by imposing seed quality check on the derogated seed after the derogation was granted, to protect the farmers and to ensure that their crop/harvest will not be rejected due to chemical residues at the end.

3.3. Database

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic seed database will be changed soon, the current one does not serve its purpose for the farmers or the seed suppliers, but it helps the certification bodies; • The database is updated according to the rules of ordinance 900 (national decree). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current database is hardly used (neither by seed producers nor by farmers); • Farmers are often not even aware that the database exists, only if they have asked for derogations it is that they come across the database; • The database is currently in the form of a pdf file and updated very infrequently (last information is 18 months old); • Farmers do not know who is in charge of the database; • Only a limited number of species/varieties available in organic quality are listed (about 60 varieties) and limited information in general; • Changing the database would require changing the ordinance; • Peasant in small areas will have the possibility to use the new database from only 2021.



OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a user-friendly, real-time, online database system (e.g. OrganicXseed); • Putting a person in charge of its management and the communication to its members: farmers and seed suppliers would need someone to train them on the database, a technical helpdesk/messenger chat box in the database for farmers could be installed to ask for advice; • Log-in function for seed suppliers to put and update offers on the database themselves; • Compatibility with other EU countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the national database will remain inferior until it shows real supply and demand; • As long as the database is not functional, policy frameworks cannot be properly developed; • Until the benefits of a database are not seen by those involved, its use will be avoided; • Reluctance to involve all stakeholders in the process.

3.4. Training opportunities

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Romania all seed producers must follow a training and pass a test run by the National Seed Authorization body before being officially registered as a seed producer; • Refreshment courses are compulsory for certified farmers to get the subsidies (APIA, institution that give subsidies); • Romania has many people engaged in agriculture, the knowledge of seed production and related practices in traditional agriculture is very high; • Research institutions are willing to offer training possibilities (e.g. NARDI in Fundulea). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of resources for extensive farmers’ training; • Lack of a central organization that coordinates the different training needs; • Compulsory training is only required for registration and certification.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong opportunity exists for exchanges of farmers’ knowledge on seed management, which should be centrally coordinated; • Information and training around the use and the opportunities that lie in the seed database should be promoted amongst farmers, suppliers, certifiers, and other stakeholders involved; • Training through participatory breeding with scientists focusing on seed health and disease resistance, and to improve the quality of farm-saved seeds; • Training related to the use of seed cleaning equipment amongst farmers; • Sharing of existing training materials and manuals with each other (e.g. manual on organic farming from Dr. Toncea). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of willingness of organic farmers to follow new courses and training due to high knowledge of traditional farming.

3.5. Access to cleaning equipment for organic seed producers

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some organic farmers who have established seed cleaning facility are skilled and can provide such service to others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment is scarcely available; • Lack of knowledge and skills for the use of equipment amongst farmers; • Subsidy for the purchase of equipment is not available.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed cleaning facilities in a cooperative manner of management would be beneficial in each county in Romania to improve access of small-scale famers; • Subsidy developed for assisting the purchase and set up of seed cleaning facilities; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interest to invest in seed cleaning facilities.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experienced organic farmers in seed cleaning could train the others. 	
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3.6 Organic breeding and variety tests

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level of breeding knowledge on local varieties and traditional seeds by peasants, supporting innovations to adapt to climate change; At the NARDI research center there are ongoing organic comparative field trials for arable field crops; Romania is a member of the Danube soya initiative; There is a high level of European cooperation and participation in projects and programs on organic breeding, exchange of knowledge; In Romania and Moldavia, high levels of organic heterogeneous material production. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need to test more varieties at multiple locations which represent the different pedo-climatic conditions across the country.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of regional breeding/testing programs for regional variety recommendations; Systematic testing of new varieties to be included in the national catalogue; Research, involving farmers, researchers, seed health authorities and certifiers, supporting the development of phytosanitary control to bring closer higher quality seed of local varieties and farm-saved seeds to the certification system, allowing the farmers to certify their seeds and offer them on the market; Setting up participatory research programs related to local varieties and to organic heterogeneous materials with farmers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of CMS hybrids (not only vegetables but sunflower, sorghum, rapeseed); The danger of GMOs and new breeding techniques; Contract farmers are told which seeds to use; Farmers’ selections of varieties are diverse, the interests in the same varieties do not reach the economy of scale at which it is possible for a research institute to carry out a field trial/testing.

3.7 Expert roundtable

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Properly trained, enthusiastic professionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of coordination, communication, and involvement of stakeholder groups.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement of all relevant actors in the development of the new seed database, and in the legislative changes connected to the implementation of the new EU Organic Regulation; “Organic seed expert group” could gather and share sector-specific knowledge with the industry, on varieties and demand; Could assist competent authorities in the development of derogation categories and variety lists to gradually phase out derogations; Could assist the competent authorities in the development of regional variety testing; Could assist in the coordination of a thorough, systematic documentation and additional research on residues and contamination in untreated seeds used for organic to understand the problem and to rebuild trust in organic produce; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mistrust between stakeholders leads them to opposing expert groups; Lack of long term financing for continuous activity of the Expert Group.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate research and collaboration needs between researchers and farmers on farm saved seeds, local varieties, seed mixtures, and organic heterogeneous materials. 	
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3.8 Traditional varieties and farm-saved seeds

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers have a wealth of knowledge; The use of farm-saved seeds is very significant in the sector as it is accepted as organic seed; Local and traditional varieties and organic heterogeneous materials are produced in high volume. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not appearing on the market; They are not certified, or tested; Not organised.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizing species-specific online trainings, Assessment of knowledge base, and extension or coordinated training opportunities involving research institutions; Development of protocols for small-scale seed production; Development of a system for farm-saved seeds similar to the controlled seed production system, especially for heterogeneous material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seed health issues pertaining due to the lack of willingness of farmers to improve seed treatment knowledge.

3. Policy changes proposed based on the Organic Regulation

- A unique opportunity exists for Romania to consult/involve all stakeholders in the preparation of the legislation and ordinances connected to the implementation of the new EU Organic Regulation 889/2008, as well as to co-design a seed database that can be used by certifiers, farmers, seed suppliers and the authorities;
- The development and adoption of derogation categories, development of the list in Annex X of regulation 889/2008;
- Besides the promotion of certified and organically propagated seeds, the state may subsidize the cost difference for seed production and treatments, or the price difference between certified organic seed and the price of the consumption seed;
- The establishment of a sectoral round table (Organic Seed Expert Group) to develop a variety assortment, develop regional variety recommendations, coordinate and assess research niches and the needs for variety testing, and to disseminate technical know-how connected to issues around farmed saved seed health, quality and storage, and to assist the better organization of market demand;
- Reduction of certain administrative burdens for seed suppliers to enter offers on the database, as well as the reduce the current timeframe for requesting derogations, sometimes 3 months prior to sowing is too soon for the farmer to dedice on a variety to use;
- Improvement of sectoral communication by providing a platform for regular opportunities of exchanges is needed (online or in person) to build trust among stakeholders;
- Setting up and subsidizing participatory research programs related to local varieties and to organic heterogeneous materials with farmers and research institutions;
- Subsidizing the establishment of seed cleaning facilities and providing access for farmers to seed cleaning equipment, facilitate the setting up of regional cooperatives that can support members in seed processing.



Annex I: Declaration of Organic Seed Romania



FUNDULEA | 19 JUNE 2019

We, undersigned, participants of the LIVESEED workshop, titled “Organic seeds”, aim to increase the production and use of organic seed in our country. Therefore, we commit to the following initiatives, activities and actions in the coming year:

1. How to improve the organic seeds database?

- The Tulcea farmers will send a letter to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in which they will suggest the possibilities for improvement of the database
- Certification bodies will actively inform organic producers about the organic seeds database existence

2. How to improve the production and use of organic seeds?

- The Tulcea farmers will set up trials on a surface of 58 ha for organic inputs, including different organic varieties
- NARDI Fundulea researchers will offer adapted seeds and technical support for organic agriculture
- Donau Soja will offer support for specific soybean seed multiplication of organic seeds if it will be requested from producers

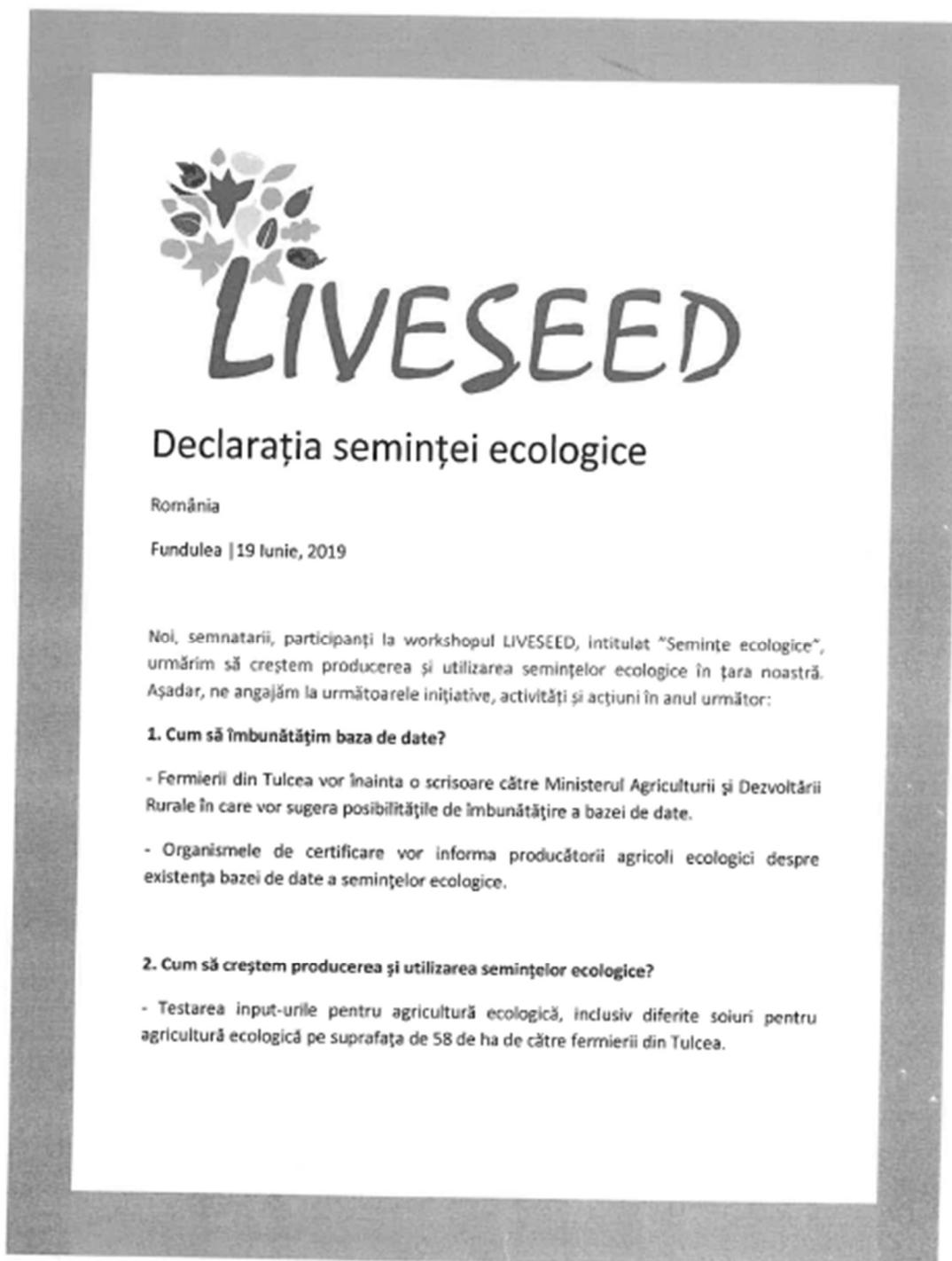
3. How to improve the production and use of organic seeds?

- Participants of this workshop will be actively involved in the debates regarding the implementation of the new Organic Regulation
- Teodor Terpez (Permaculture Institute) will initiate a social media platform that will help the exchange of information between organic seed producers and farmers about organic seed offers and demands
- Tulcea farmers will organize a meeting in the coming year in Tulcea on the topic of organic seeds



- Marius Casis (Romanian Association for Sustainable Agriculture) will organize a special session on Organic Seeds at the 3rd edition of organic agriculture fair ECO-INT Natural Taste

Signed in Fundulea, on the 19th of June 2019 by:



- Cercetătorii de la INCDIA Fundulea vor oferi soiuri de semințe adaptate pentru agricultura ecologică și suport tehnic pentru producerea de sămânță ecologică.

- Donau Soja poate oferi suport pentru organizarea multiplicării unor soiuri de soia specifice dacă este cerere din partea producătorilor.

3. Cum să îmbunătățim comunicarea și cooperarea -în producerea și folosirea de sămânță ecologică?

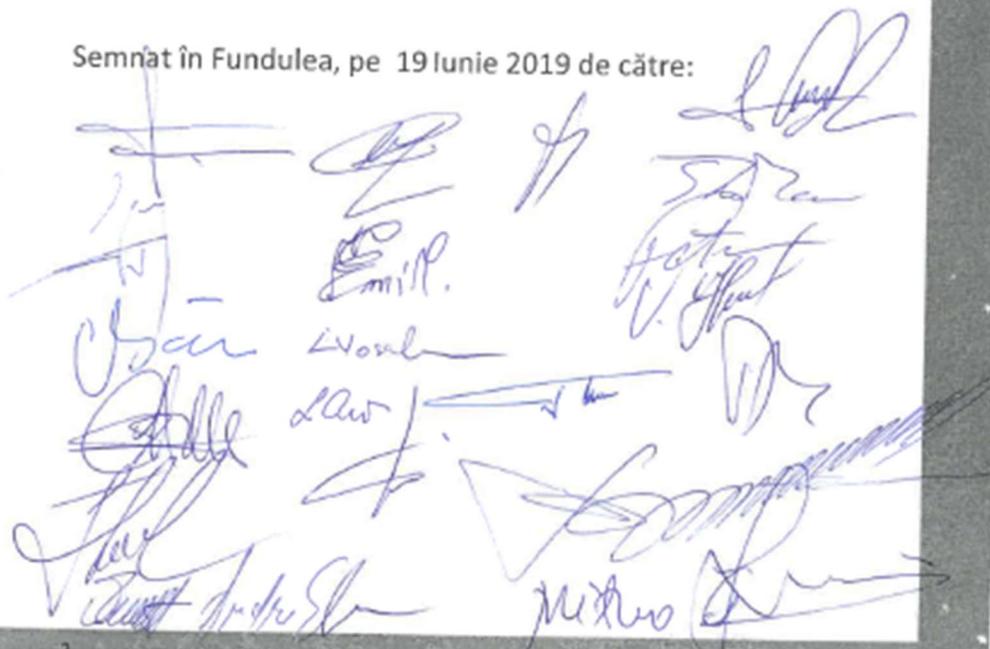
- Participanții din cadrul acestui workshop vor participa activ la consultările despre aplicarea noului regulament al agriculturii ecologice.

- Teodor Terpez (Institutul de Permacultură) va crea o platformă social media pentru producătorii de semințe ecologice pentru a face schimb de informații.

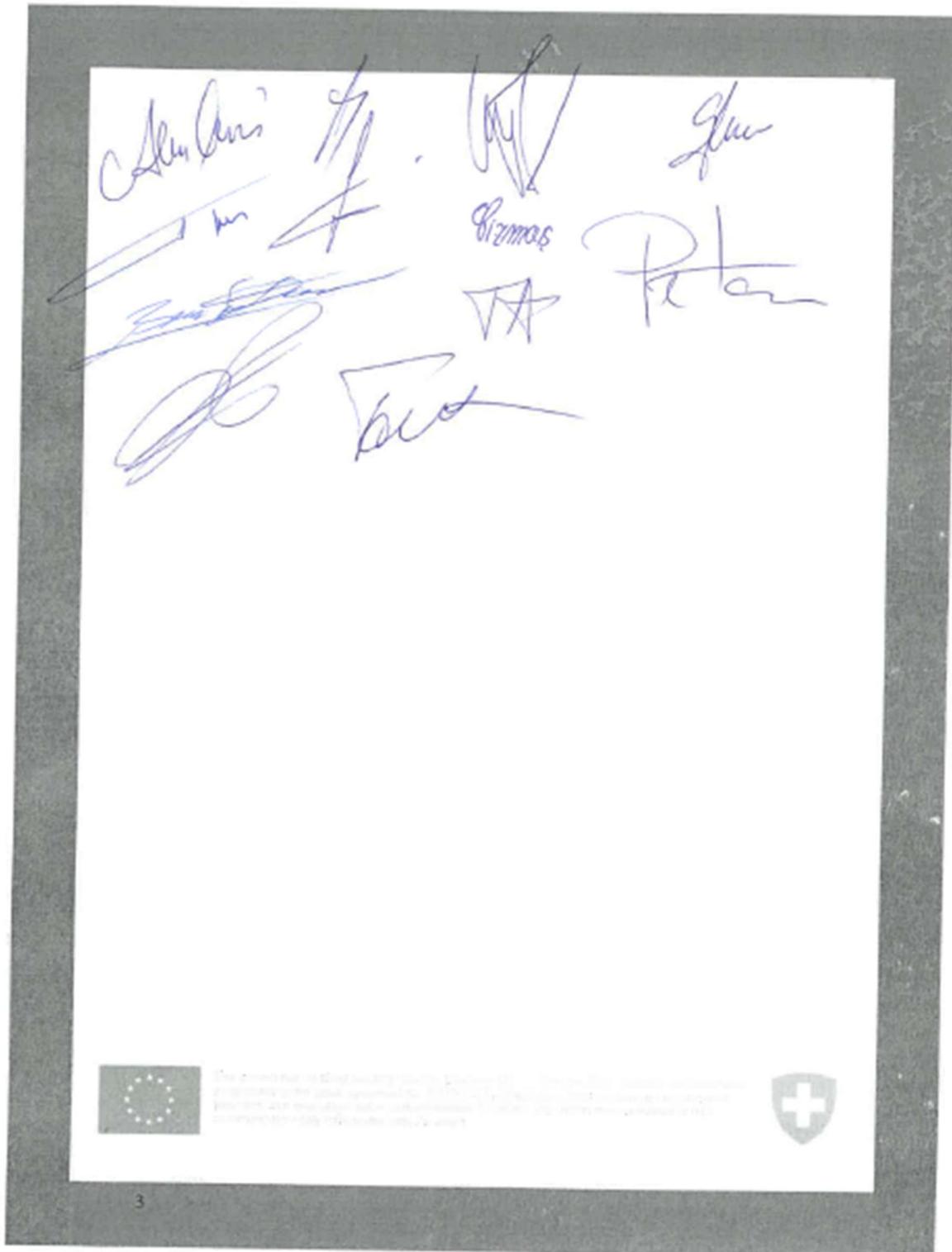
- Fermierii din Tulcea vor organiza o întâlnire la Tulcea pe tema semințelor ecologice.

- Organizarea unei sesiuni speciale pentru semințele ecologice la a 3-a ediție a târgului de agricultură ecologică ECO-INT Natural Taste – Marius Casis (Asociația Română pentru Agricultură Durabilă).

Semnat în Fundulea, pe 19 Iunie 2019 de către:



A collection of approximately 15 handwritten signatures in blue ink, arranged in several rows. Some signatures are accompanied by printed names: 'Emil P.', 'V. Ghent', 'Marius Casis', and 'Mikro'. The signatures are diverse in style, representing various individuals involved in the workshop.



Annex II. Workshop Agenda

Workshop – The Organic seeds

Fundulea, Romania, June 19th 2019

[Conference Room, NARDI Fundulea, Str. N. Titulescu nr 1, 915200](#)

[Fundulea, Calarasi, Romania](#)

Chair: Ion Toncea

Timing	Agenda
9.30 - 10.00	<i>Registration + coffee</i>
10.00 - 10.10 10.10 - 10.25 10.25-10.40 10.40- 10.55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome and opening by ION Toncea , NARDI Current situation on organic farming and seed in Romania – (MADR) Summary of the results of the national visit and short explanation of the aim of the LIVESEED workshop – Mrs. Maaïke Raaijmakers (Bionext) The new Organic Regulation and heterogeneous material- Mrs. Pauline Verrière (IFOAM EU) Organic seed database – Mrs. Katharina Brühl (FiBL-DE) Discussion
10.55-11.10 11.10-11.30	Testimonials from other stakeholders on how to improve the availability and use of organic seeds in Romania:
11.30-12.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representative from the Tulcea farmers Certifiers Representatives from seed associations and companies Researchers
12.30-12.40	Introduction to group work
12.40-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>
	Group work - 3 groups Question 1. How to work together for testing and promoting organic seeds? 30' Question 2. How to increase production and use of organic seed in Romania? 30' Question 3. How to improve the communication and cooperation between the stakeholders in Romania? 30'
	<i>Coffee break</i>
16.00 - 17.00	Plenary session Plenary discussion 30' Moderation: Maaïke Raaijmakers 30' Signing of the declaration on organic seed Conclusions and follow up
17.00- 18.00	Visit the organic farming experimental fields of NARDI institute

Annex III. List of Participants



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.



Bac	Calin	SC Rolling Kernells SRL
Benchea - Joca	Daniel	SC MOLDOVA FARMING SRL
Calin	Maria	STATIUNEA DE CERCETARE-DPLB
Cana	Lidia	INCDA Fundulea
Casis	Marius	A. R. A. D.
Casis	Tiberius	Eco-Agricultura
Dan	Raluca	Eco Ruralis
Darie	Rodica	MADR
Dinca	Liviu	Lav Agro DINCA SRL
Dinu	Andreea-Adriana	
Dragomir	Bogdan Lucian	CLUSTER BIO DANUBIUS
Duminicioiu	Ramona	Eco Ruralis
Florea	Liviu-Daniel	Ecocert SRL
Georgescu	Emil Igor Vlad	INCDA Fundulea
Ghenea	Maria	ASOCIATIA OPERATORILOR DIN AGRICULTURA ECOLOGICA BIO ROMANIA
Gheorghe	Gheorghe	SC ADAFLOR SRL
Gherciu	Viorel	AO Reprezentanta Verein Donau Soja din Austria in Moldova
Goloborodco	Ana	SRAC CERT SRL
Grigoras	Florian	SC NEW ECO STUF SRL
Grosulescu	Iulia	MADR
Mirea	Emilian	SCDL Buzau
Mitrea	Gabriela	Bio Cert Traditional SRL
Moise	Adina Maria	Asociatia Romania in Tranzitie
Paraschiv	Adelina	Donau Saat
Petcu	Elena	Institutul National de Cercetare Dezvoltare Agricola Fundulea
Petrescu	Petrisor	Cluster BIO Danubius
Petrus	Aurel	BIECOOP STEFAN CEL MARE -- BIOTERRA CLUJ
Popescu	Eugen	SC PERIFERIC CONSULT SRL membru ECORURALIS
Popescu	Ionuț Mircea	SC Bejo România SRL
Stan	Olga	INCDA Fundulea
Stanciu	Tudor	Sc Beleza Store Srl
Tănase	Aida	Direcția Agricolă CL
Terpez	Teodor	Asociatia Institutul de Cercetare in Permacultura din Romania
Toader	Alexandru	SCDL Buzau
Trandafir	Răzvan Ionut	SC Bejo România SRL
Tudor	Ion	P.F.A .
Tudose	Alexandru	SC Yellow Electric Sun SRL
Toncea	Dr. Ion	INCDA Fundulea
Petcu	Victor	INCDA Fundulea
Verrière	Pauline	IFOAM EU GROUP
Raaijmakers	Maaïke	BIONEXT
Brühl	Katharina	FIBL-DE
Petcu	Eugen	INCDA Fundulea
Vasilescu	Liliana	INCDA Fundulea
Cizmas	George	INCDA Fundulea
Nelu	Adamache	
Catalin	Lazar	INCDA Fundulea
Teodorescu	Andreea	DONAUSAAT
Serban	Mihaela	INCDA Fundulea
Gonzales	Joaquin	Daymsa
Sin	Gheorghe	ASAS
Sava	Elisabeta	Istis

Annex IV. Country Report for Romania (2018)



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.





Country Report for Romania

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

Dissemination level: Public

Publication Date: 28 May 2019

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About the report

This report has been produced in the framework of the Horizon 2020-funded project LIVESEED.⁴ 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 Romania took place on 19th June 2019 in Fundulea and was co-organised by the LIVESEED partner National Agricultural Research and Development (NARDI).

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, plant breeders, seed authorities, and the general public.

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⁴ <http://liveseed.eu>



Implementation of the regulation on organic seed in Romania

Findings from the national visit to Romania, 12-15th March 2018

1. General information

In 2017, there were 7,908 organic farmers in Romania covering 1,77% (258,471 ha) of the agricultural land area. From this area 19,61% is permanent grassland, 71,53% is covered with arable crops and 5,09 % are permanent crops (Source: The World of Organic Agriculture – Statistics & Emerging Trends 2019).

2. Production and use of organic seed

Farmers are the main producers of organic (and conventional) seed in Romania. There are over four thousand farmers registered as seed producer and above one hundred of them are organic farmers. To be authorised as a seed producer, farmers must know the seed regulation in force and pass an exam with the local seed authorities. When a farmer is registered as a seed producer, the field is inspected, the seed quality is tested, and their seed is certified. The seed companies that sell organic seed on the Romanian market are predominantly international companies.

Many organic farmers in Romania re-use their own seed. This farm saved seed is accepted as organic seed, so no derogation is needed for this.

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

The organic department from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is responsible for the Romanian organic seed database. The database is a PDF file on the Ministry's website. There is a separate list for seed mixtures. This list is currently empty.

There are 41 counties in Romania, and in every county one person is responsible for all organic issues, including the rules on organic seed. To offer your seed on the database you must prove that you are an authorised seed producer or supplier and your seed must be certified organic. Seed suppliers must submit all documents on paper to the county level agricultural authority. The Ministry uploads all information to the online database as soon as a change in the seed offer has been communicated. For seed mixtures a special form must be used. Foreign companies that want to enter the database need a branch (legal basis) in Romania and the company must register at the county level. Their seed must be certified as organic by a Romanian certifier.

The certifiers are responsible for granting the derogations. Farmers must request a derogation three months before cultivation. To receive a derogation, they must prove that there is no organic seed available from the variety they want to use. To prove this, they have to ask 2 or 3 (depending on their certifier) seed suppliers for organic seed. If those suppliers declare on paper that they cannot deliver it, the farmer will get a derogation. There is no general derogation list.

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



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From 2015 to 2018, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development funded a research project aiming to develop organic seed production for the main arable crops. The project included several field trials and organic seed production at NARDI Fundulea and at experimental stations in Pitești, Valu lui Traian (Constanța) and Șimnic (Dolj).

At the NARDI research centre there are ongoing organic comparative field trials for arable field crops (wheat, barley, triticale, oat, millet, buckwheat, maize, peas, lentils, lupine, soybean, camelina, sunflower), forage crops (alfalfa, trifolium, grasses) and medicinal crops (coriander, Phacelia, *Crambe tataria*). NARDI Fundulea also participates in breeding research in the LIVESEED project and in the European project 'Eco-Breed' with wheat and soybean. Romania is member of the Danube soya initiative. This is mainly a conventional initiative for the production of non-GMO soya, but they also organise field trials on organic farms.

5. Obstacles and opportunities

One obstacle is the fact that the current seed database is not functional. Most organic seed that is on the market is sold directly to farmers and not offered on the database. Therefore, the database is not used by farmers. The certification bodies do not rely on the organic seed database either. They ask the farmers for additional prove to show that organic seed from a specific variety is not available.

The database is also difficult to access for seed suppliers. The deadline for putting seed on the database does not match with the process of seed cleaning and registration. Seed producers know only after this deadline how much organic seed there will be available for sale.

Many farmers produce organic to receive more European subsidies. They do not sell their products on the organic market and they are not interested in organic seeds.

Farmers can also easily circumvent the use of organic seed. They just ask for a variety for which no organic seed is available. Sometimes farmers even invent variety names when asking for a derogation.

An organic farmer mentioned that his organic products were decertified due to the fact that the certifier found residues of chemicals in his seed. He used untreated conventional seed for which he received a derogation. According to one of the certifiers it is sometimes questionable if the conventional seeds that are used are really untreated. The question is how to check this, since untreated conventional seeds may also contain residues.

Although there is not enough organic seed available for any crop to fulfil the demand, it is quite easy for farmers to access organic cereal seed. For crops with many hybrids like maize, sunflower and rape seed, the seed access is more difficult. Big seed companies that produce hybrids are not interested in producing for the small organic market; they see no market for organic seed in Romania.

Vegetables are a niche which is weakly developed in Romania. Therefore, there are no organic seeds from suitable varieties available. In cases where the farmer produces organic products under contract, the buyer of the product usually decides what varieties are used and they also deliver the seeds.

According to one seed company the problem for organic farmers is not the lack of good genetics (varieties), but the farm management and the preparation of the soil. Many farmers have not learned how to manage a farm.

An opportunity is the fact that there are many skilled organic farmers in Romania that are registered as seed producer. For instance, in the Tulcea district which has the largest area of organic farming. This is due to the fact that the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve is located there. Only organic farming is allowed in this Nature 2000 area. In this region a cooperative of large farmers is aiming to become self-sufficient in their organic seed production. They have their own seed cleaning factory and sell the cleaned seeds directly to their members.

Recommendations from the stakeholders



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- Create incentives for seed producers and farmers to make organic seed more attractive.
- Research institutes that have a production part are potential producers of organic seed.
- Create a market for organic seed; increase the demand. If there is a demand, more companies will offer organic seed.
- Find the right crops to grow organic in Romania and then invest in adapted varieties. Focus on specific crops e.g. soy seeds.
- The production of seeds should be closer to the demands of consumers; it is important to select suitable organic cultivars and breed new ones.
- Romanian people are looking for quality food even if they are poor. This is a cultural aspect and an opportunity for organic farmers and producers.
- Reduce the administrative burden; some seed producers work organic but are not certified, because it is a very bureaucratic process.
- Create an expert group on organic seed.
- Subsidise the use of organic seeds.
- Currently most organic farmers export their products. Creating a market here will help to create a market for organic seeds.
- Make it easier for seed suppliers to remove seed offers from the database or to enter new seeds; currently this is very complicated.
- Education and practical trainings about organic farming and breeding are needed.

6. More information

Romanian seed database:

<https://www.madr.ro/agricultura-ecologica/baza-de-date-seminte-sii-ae.html>

Derogation reports:

<https://www.madr.ro/agricultura-ecologica/baza-de-date-seminte-ecologice.html>

National legislation for organic farming:

<https://www.madr.ro/agricultura-ecologica/legislatie-nationala-ae.html>

Research:

http://www.incda-fundulea.ro/index_en.html

<http://www.donausoja.org/en/home/>

Database of seed producers http://date.incs.bvl.ro/agenti/agenti_public.aspx

