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

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

Dissemination level: Public

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WP Leader: Freya Schaefer (FiBL-DE)

1. Background

This report presents the results of the workshop held in Athens on the 4th of October 2019, under the Horizon 2020 LIVESEED project. It aims at presenting specific recommendations for Greece on how to improve the production and the use of organic seeds.
This workshop gathered around 30 different stakeholders from Greece, the Ministry in charge of agricultural issues, seeds companies, associations of organic farmers or breeders.

As part of LIVESEED project[1], a national visit took place in this country from February 4th to 6th in 2018, to better understand the bottlenecks and the possibilities of improvements regarding the production and the use of organic seeds at the national level. The main outcomes of those visits are summarized in the country report (Annex IV) that was used as a basis for the workshop discussion in 2019.

During the first part of the workshop, different stakeholders reflected on the status quo of the country and gave testimonials on their analyses of the situation. During the second part of the workshop, all stakeholders were invited to discuss the following issues. Guiding questions for discussions were:

- How to improve the organic seed database?
- How to improve the production and use of organic seeds?
- How to improve the cooperation between the stakeholders?

Based on those discussions a SWOT analysis, and policy recommendations were highlighted. The main outcomes of the discussion will be followed up by actions recorded in the Seed Declaration for Organic Seed that all stakeholders agreed to take at the end of the day (see Annex I).

2. Reflections on the Status Quo of the Organic Sector and Seed Production

With 5.0% (410,140 hectares) of the total agricultural land area being organic in 2017, Greece found itself shortly below the average of all EU countries (7.0%). This area, of which 48.9% were grassland, 36.6% arable crops and 14.5% permanent crops, was managed by 20,197 organic farmers. In 2017 more than half of the organic farmland was fully converted (280,733 hectares), leaving the majority already fully organic[2].

The number of organic agriculture land area increased over the last decade by almost 30 percent, and organic markets in Greece have been grown up to a certain level (with many organic markets in capital cities) as the legal framework for their function has been improved recently. But the organic seed market at the moment is very small.

Most organic seeds are imported, but it comes with issues on its own: beans from Italy, for example, are not well adapted to the conditions in Greece and don't bring the yields that are expected. This contributes

[1] Liveseed.eu, Work Package 1 'Regulation & policy framework regarding production, use and transparency of organic seed.
[2] FiBL & IFOAM: The World of Organic Agriculture: Statistics & Emerging Trends 2019

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to the fact that farmers often suspect foreign seed companies to deliver them not the seed that was actually purchased.

When farmers are buying seed, from foreign or national suppliers, it is sold to them directly. As a result, there are currently no seed suppliers registered on the database. This makes it easy for farmers to obtain derogations, as the offers on the database, or rather the lack of, serves as a precondition for the authorization of derogation. Nonetheless are the numbers of derogations becoming lower, as the use of farm-saved seed doesn't require derogations anymore.

3. Main Outcomes of the Group Discussions

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

- Making the database more functional by involving suppliers of plant reproductive material in keeping the database updated with their offers
- Adding information about producer and characteristics of the varieties (this would help organic producers to make better decisions about their production)
- Including national and traditional cultivars
- Making the quantity of seed offered invisible for the farmers
- Setting a threshold for amount of seed that has to be offered, to avoid varieties being listed that are not sufficient in quantity for commercial use
- Eradicating the fee for registration, as it acts like a disincentive for registering on database and will not comply with the new EU organic regulation
- Involving all stakeholders in improving and further developing the database
- Raising awareness on the database amongst all stakeholders

3.2. Improving the availability of organic seed could be approached by:

- Subsidizing the organic seed production as an incentive to start
- Highlighting the benefits of using organic seed to producers via trainings and easily available information
- Raising the demand for organic seed by increasing its use by farmers (see 3.3) and informing consumers
- Further promoting participatory breeding as a way to develop locally adapted varieties that are approved by farmers
- Offering trainings on how to produce and save organic seed that complies with phytosanitary standards
- Farmers starting their own seed production facility (as witnessed during a LIVESEED Cross Visit, where French cereal producer associations established a seed production cooperative)
- Establishing associations of organic farmers in which a small number of members are licensed as seed producers.

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3.3. Improving the use of organic seed could be approached by:

- Giving farmers more points in the organic subsidy system for using organic seed
- Informing farmers about the benefits of using organic seed through trainings, consultants, and publications; start early on by involving technical schools
- Investing in research and demonstration fields to be able to show farmers that good results can be achieved and further convince them of its usability
- Informing consumers about the benefits of organic seed, starting at a young age through collaborations between farmers and schools
- Establishing Associations and networks of farmers that enables them to channel and express their needs in a more organized way towards seed suppliers, researchers and the Ministry of Agriculture

3.4. Opportunities to engage relevant stakeholders are:

- It is necessary to strengthen the cooperation between all institutions and stakeholders to counteract the lack of trust between them and facilitate collaboration
- The working group on landrace conservation (established in 2010 by the Ministry of Agriculture), that consisted of seed experts and representatives from NGOs, should be reactivated as a seed expert group and enriched with missing stakeholders
- Farmers need to get more organized to achieve a systemic representation of them to the other stakeholders
- Stimulating synergies between research bodies and seed producers and exploring hybrid schemes of farmers, private companies, and institutes
- Encouraging exchanges of information on different levels

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

4.1. Subsidy system

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• …	• Current subsidy system is seen by farmers as untargeted and unfair, e.g. instead of farmers, land owners receive the subsidies • Extra expenses of organic production are not compensated • Production for organic farmers is often not feasible without technical and financial support • Farmers often don't have access to foreign seed, as they are obliged to buy large quantities, they cannot afford • The higher price of organic seed can contribute significantly to the overall production costs. This is

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	especially true for vegetable growers and for every farmer who cannot find the respective organic market and has to sell conventionally.
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• Use subsidies as incentive and grant more points for using organic seeds • Likewise, subsidies for organic seed production could increase availability of organic varieties	• The Ministry often misses its responsibility to distribute subsidies to the farmers, only in very specific cases it hands them out • Malfunctioning subsidy system threatens many farmers in their existence

4.2. Derogation rules, national annex

STRENGTHS	**WEAKNESSES**
• Sanctions in place for unauthorised use of untreated conventional seed in organic (fields are downgraded up to a year)	• It is too easy to obtain derogations: if seed is not available or not available in requested quantity on database • Due to reluctance of suppliers to make offers on database, it does not work as adequate base for granting derogation • General derogation list hinders estimating the demand of organic seed
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• General derogation list should be introduced to reduce administrative burden • If the production and availability of organic seed allows, derogations should be continuously limited	• Phasing out of derogations in 2035 could have a negative impact on organic farming when the situation has not improved significantly

4.3. Database

STRENGTHS	**WEAKNESSES**
• Includes information on contact, variety, region, country of recognition, availability (time) • Updated weekly	• Organic seeds exist, but are sold directly and not offered on database • Seed suppliers must pay a small fee per variety to offer it on database (this will end with the new EU organic Regulation, as it states that access should be free of charge) • Some farmers are not aware of its existence
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• The Ministry offers to further improve the database, when there are more registrations • Function for farmers to express demand for certain varieties could be introduced, as this would help breeders and seed suppliers to anticipate their needs • The usability of the Database should be assessed. • Direct interface for suppliers would allow suppliers to update their offers themselves • Possibility to offer traditional cultivars could be introduced	• Currently not one seed supplier registered on database • If not more farmers are interested in using organic seeds and seed suppliers don't place their offers, the database will remain useless despite the technical improvements

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• It could give more, but not too much information (e.g. quantities should be visible only for the Ministry) • To counteract the offering of a lot of varieties in insufficient quantities, a minimum threshold could be introduced	

4.4. Training opportunities

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Organic sector aware of need for training, not just accumulation of knowledge	• Small farmers are lacking know-how and trust in organic seed
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• IPBGR could demonstrate the performance of good quality organic seed and provide needed know-how • Information on benefits of organic seed and different varieties should be distributed to farmers, but also consumers (starting at school level, e.g. through school cafeterias) • Training for farmers on seed production would provide them with needed skills to become qualified seed producers. Training should occur at different levels: farmers, technical schools, agronomists. • Scope of seed schools (organic seed training courses currently given by AEGILOPS) could be enlarged by also involving the control institute and gene bank • Consultants for farmers on how to produce organically could help farmers to go 100% organic, maybe couple subsidies with consultancy. • Trainings from Farmer to Farmers could be a viable option to exchange best practices • A farmer's association will publish collected information on pesticides and makes an example on the services such associations, and therefore farmers, can provide for themselves	• In lack of training, farmed saved seeds will be harvested and stored without proper management and lack the quality needed for growing under organic conditions. • Financialization seems to remain difficult

4.5. Organic breeding and variety test

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• IPBGR and HAO Demeter established a project for oat & barley in low-input conditions • First experiences with participatory breeding brought good results in developing varieties that are adapted at local level • Gene bank preserves large number of cultivars which can be used for breeding • Universities are involved in organic breeding and related research experiments (University of Thessaloniki / Thessaly, Agricultural University of Athens and Dimocritus University of Thrace)	• Research not very well coordinated and not sufficient • Existing organic seeds are often of lower quality (in particular legumes), especially at germination rates, they also need to be adapted to local conditions
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**

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• Participatory breeding could be further developed to raise acceptance of organic seed in farmers • Exploit products of collaboration between researchers and private companies commercially to incentivize investment -> explore hybrid schemes of farmers, private companies and institutes.	• Retailers establish their own standards and demand varieties with specific characteristics that are not particularly supportive of organic

4.6. Expert roundtable

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• There is openness in the Ministry to organise a seed expert group • In the past, there was a working group established for landrace conservation, there is already experience	• There should be an expert committee to assure regular contact between private and public sector, but it is inactive
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• An expert group that consists of all stakeholders would ensure representation and involvement of each in developing strategies and making decisions and would raise trust into each other • There is a need to monitor the demand/supply • An expert group could advise on how to improve the database	• …

4.7. Traditional varieties and farm-saved seeds for own use

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Farm-saved seed can be used when it comes from organic practices, from in-conversion after 12 months	• Farm saved seed must not be sold by farmers (this will change with the new EU organic regulation)
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• Farm saved seed promotes varieties adapted to local conditions	• The use of farmed saved seed will remain significant until organic certified seed is much less expensive and provides the yield or quality expected by growers • Many companies sell seed unjustified as traditional varieties

5. Policy recommendations

- For promoting production and use of organic seeds, it could be highly beneficial to start subsidizing it and subsidizing it more accurately (by attributing more points), respectively. In either case, it is essential that farmers actually receive the financial support they are entitled to.
- To prevent the financial support to be the only incentive, seed producers and farmers should receive trainings and consultation, and have sufficient information material (e.g. online/printed publications, brochures etc.) at their disposal on how to produce, save and use organic seed properly.

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- Additionally, showing the advantages and efficiency of organic seed to organic operators in real life at Research institutes (IGBPR) could further contribute to raising the production and use of organic seed.
- Also, consumers should be made aware of the benefits of organic agriculture and products (especially when originated from organic seed) through campaigns, as this could raise the demand and create a larger national organic market.
- To increase the acceptance of farmers for organic seed, they should be more involved in the breeding process, as this can also help the cultivars to be more adapted to local conditions, and be in closer contact with researchers in general, as this would further promote trust between them.
- On a similar note, all stakeholders (or representatives thereof) should be invited to be in regularly exchange and have their say in national legislation processes, on the database, etc. This can happen by re-activating the biodiversity conservation working group as an organic seed expert group. Such a group would also allow to better attune the production and demand of organic seed and could develop different categories of derogations.
- For farmers it therefore will be important to better organize themselves (through associations) and formulate common requests that can be expressed by an assigned representative.
- Authorization of derogation is too loose and should not solely depend on the offers of organic seed on the database at this moment.
- There is room for technical improvements regarding the database as mentioned above in the SWOT-Analysis. The issue that some farmers are not aware of its existence should be addressed as well, as this will be vital for the database to fulfill its purpose.

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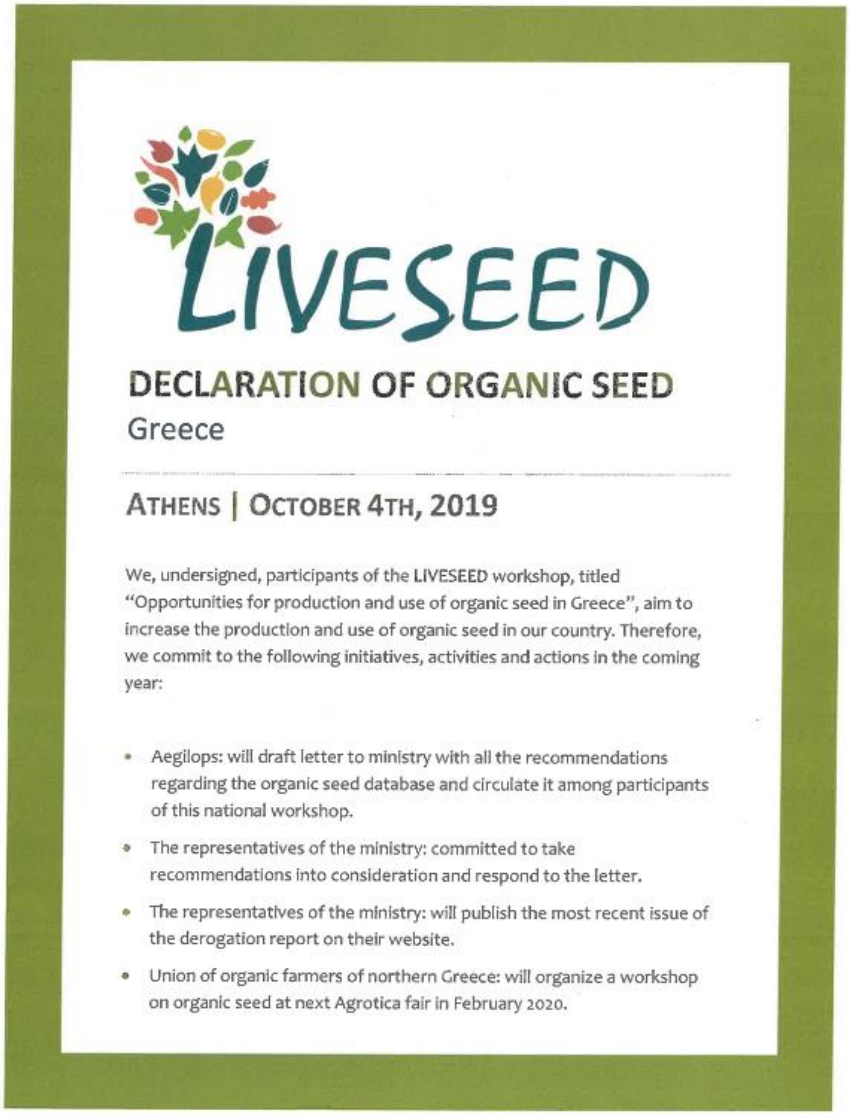
Annex I: Declaration of Organic Seed Greece

The National Workshop gave the opportunities to the different stakeholders participating to discuss and agree on the best activities to implement in order to increase the production and the use of organic seeds in the Greece. In 2020, during the last phase of this project, an assessment will be done to compare this following agreement and see what was done in the country, what was not feasible and if the situation regarding organic seeds improved.



LIVESEED

DECLARATION OF ORGANIC SEED

Greece

ATHENS | OCTOBER 4TH, 2019

We, undersigned, participants of the LIVESEED workshop, titled "Opportunities for production and use of organic seed in Greece", 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:

- Aegilops: will draft letter to ministry with all the recommendations regarding the organic seed database and circulate it among participants of this national workshop.
- The representatives of the ministry: committed to take recommendations into consideration and respond to the letter.
- The representatives of the ministry: will publish the most recent issue of the derogation report on their website.
- Union of organic farmers of northern Greece: will organize a workshop on organic seed at next Agrotica fair in February 2020.

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- Union of organic farmers of northern Greece: will invite speaker Jiannis Mylonas from IPBPGR (gene bank) who is elaborating on advantages of organic seed at this event.
- Rallou Tsingou: provides suggestions for breeders on how to organize a platform in the internet to connect young farmers.
- The representatives from the ministry: committed to activate the scientific committee for organic farming.
- Giorgos Doumos & BioFRU: are interested to be involved in organic seed production.
- Farmers associations present at this meeting: do inventory among their members to find out how many farmers would be interested to become organic seed producers and what kind of training they need.
- IPBPGR: will set up course on organic seed production if there is sufficient interest.
- Kiriakos Palasidis from Association of Organic Farming Certifiers: will disseminate information about advantages of organic seed to organic auditors and agronomists.
- Kiriakos Palasidis: will put organic seed high on the agenda in meetings with the ministry of agriculture.
- Agroecology network of Greece: will put education and training on the issue of organic seeds on the agenda when meeting in September 2020.

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Annex II. Workshop Agenda

Opportunities for production and use of organic seed in Greece

Athens, Greece, 04 October 2019

Ibis Styles Athens Routes Vouliagmenis Avenue 109-11636 , Athens

Chair: Kostas KoutisCo-chair: Irini Katsalirou, Christina Vakali

Timing	Agenda
9.30 - 10.00	*Registration + coffee*
10.00 - 10.10	**PRESENTATIONS:** **E.g.** **Welcome and Opening**
10.10 - 10.55	**Context** • Summary of the national visit, short explanation of the aim of the LIVESEED workshop (*Maaike Raaijmakers*, *Bionext*) • EU legal framework (*Thomas Haselberger*, *IFOAM EU*) • Explanation of the Router database (*FiBL-DE*)
10.55 - 11.00	Video on why farmers use organic seed
11.00 - 11.30	**Current national situation on organic seed database** Ministry of Rural Development and Food. Directorate of Quality Schemes and Organic Farming*(Alexandra Spilioti)*
11.30 - 12.15	**Testimonials from other stakeholders** : • Greek Plant Breeders' Society (*Vasilis Papasotiropoulos*) • HAO Demeter, Institute of Plant Breeding and Plant Genetic Resources (*Eleni Maloupa)* • Ecofarmers' Union of North Greece (*Chrysa Skorditi*) • OIKOTROPIO, Kastoria Ecological Farmers (*Stefanos Liouzas*) • Association of Organic Farming Certifiers (*Kiriakos Palasidis*) • Greek Seed Producers Association (*Michalis Anatolitis)*
12.15	**Introduction to group work** IFOAM EU
12.30	*Lunch*

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13.30 -15.00 **15.00 - 15.30**	**Group work - 3 groups** **Topic 1.** how to improve the seed database **Topic 2.** how to increase the production and use of organic seed in Greece **Topic 3.** how to improve cooperation between the stakeholders (seed expert group?) Summaries from working group moderators, drafting of the declaration of organic seed
15.30 - 16.00	*Coffee break*
16.00 - 17.00	**Plenary session** Presentation and signing of the declaration; conclusions and follow up

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Annex III. Participants of the Workshop

Aleka	Delliou	State Certification Center for PPM (Giannitsa)
Aris	Gerakis	Organic Farming Consultance
Arvanitis	Thodoris	Organic Farmer
Charitos	Spiridon	Organic Farmer
Chrysoula	Skorditi	Union of Northern Greece Ecofarmers
Dimitrios	Yiassas	FYTOPOLIS Plant nyrsery
Eirini	Katsalirou	Ionian University,Faculty of Environmental Sciences
Eleni	Kotali	Variety Research Institute of Cultivated Plants (V.R.I.C.P.)
Eleni	Tziavara	Ministry of Agriculture
Evaggelos	Korpetis	Institute of Plant Breeding and Genetic Resources-Hellenic Agriculture Organization Demeter (Cereals))
Gatzert	Xenia	FiBL-DE
Giannis	Mylonas	Institute of Plant Breeding and Genetic Resources- Hellenic Agriculture Organization Demeter (Gene Bank)
Giorgos	Doumos	Organic Farmer (landrace grower)
Haselberger	Thomas	IFOAM EU
Kanelopoulou	Vaso	Peliti (NGO)
Kiriaki	Zeftiridou	ECOTROPIO Kastoria Ecofarmers' Association
Kleopatra	Giannakopoulou	Organic farmers of Patra - Agronomist, researcher
Koutis	Kostas	Aegilops
Lamrpou	Georgios	Trader of Organic Products
Letitsi	Xaralt	BIOSPOROS (Organic Seeds trade)
Mairi	Arampatzi	ARAMPATZIS Farmer (Organic Vineyard)
Mpegerianos	Stamatis	Union of Organic Farmers of Attiki
Nikolaos	Palivos	Ministry of Agriculture
Nikos	Tsimopoulos	Organic Farmer
Palasidis	Kiriakos	Association of Organic Farming Certifiers
Pasamichali	Olympia	Olyplant
Raaijmakers	Maaike	BIONEXT
Rallitsa	Tsingou	Aegean Islands regional authority administration-Agriculture sector
Sevastiani	Lioyza	BioFru - Organic Fruit Trees
Sommer	Martin	IFOAM EU
Spilioti	Alexandra	Ministry of Agriculture
Vakali	Christina	Aegilops
Vasilis	Papasotiriou	Greek Platn Breeders Association
Veikontis	Georgios	Agroecology Network of Greece

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Annex IV. Country Report

Country Report for Greece

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

Dissemination level: Public

Publication Date: 11 September 2019

Authors: Maaike Raaijmakers (Bionext, Netherlands)

Local partner involved in the visit and the revision of the report: Christina Vakalis, Kostas Koutis (AEGILOPS)

WP Leader: Freya Schaefer (FiBL-DE)

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About the report

This report has been produced in the framework of the Horizon 2020-funded project LIVESEED.[2] 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 Greece took place on 4th October 2019 in Athens and was co-organised by the LIVESEED partner AEGILOPS.

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.

For further information concerning this report, please contact:
Ms. Maaike Raaijmakers: raaijmakers@bionext.nl
Bionext is the Dutch chain organization for organic agriculture and food.

For further information concerning the LIVESEED project, please contact:
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Visit our website: liveseed.eu, and our social media: Facebook and Twitter: LIVESEEDeu

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[2] http://liveseed.eu

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Implementation of the regulation on organic seed in Greece

Findings from the national visit to Greece, 4-6th February 2018

1. General information

In 2017, there were 20,197 organic farmers in Greece covering 5% (410,000 ha) of the agricultural land area. From this area 48.9 % is permanent grassland, 36.6 % is covered with arable crops and 14.5 % are permanent crops (source: IFOAM EU).

2. Production and use of organic seed

There are two seed associations in Greece; one for the seed trading companies that controls around 70% of the seed market and one for the Greek conventional seed companies controlling 30% of the market. There are no Greek seed companies producing organic seed. The organic seeds on the market are imported, mainly vegetable seeds from Italy, and only available in small quantities.

Most organic seed in Greece is farm saved seed. Before 2017, around 70% of the derogations were for farm saved seeds. Since 2017 farmers can use farm saved seeds without derogation for all varieties that are not protected by breeder's rights.

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

The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for the management of the national organic seed database. The database is updated on specific dates related to the sowing period of crops. Currently the database is empty. To enter their seed on the database a (national or foreign) seed supplier needs to be certified as an organic operator and seed producer in Greece. They must offer their supply at a regional level. The suppliers must pay a 10-euro fee per variety because in the past one supplier uploaded a lot of varieties which were only available in small amounts. These quantities were not enough for professional farmers.

Farmers can apply for a derogation at one of the 52 regional authorities. They must enter an application in an electronic platform. If a farmer asks for a derogation and there is organic seed from this crop available on the database, the system blocks the derogation. Then the farmer must contact the Ministry and provide arguments why he needs this specific variety and why the one available is not suitable. Farmers must ask for a derogation for every variety regardless the crop. There are no general derogations. Farmers only get a derogation for the area they grow. The regional authorities check the amount of seed requested for derogation and the area for cultivation.

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

There are currently no policy measures to increase production and use of organic seed.

5. Breeding research and field trials

The Institute of Plant Breeding and Plant Genetic Resources (IPBGR) is connected to the Greek gene bank and has several breeding programs. They breed cereals (wheat, barley, oats and rye) for low-input

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systems. These varieties are suitable for organic farming. IPBGR sells the basic seed from their own varieties to conventional Greek seed companies which then propagate them and sell these varieties to farmers - including organic farmers who buy under derogation as conventional seed.

The gene bank is focussing on landraces and local varieties of all crops cultivated in Greek agriculture. In total the collection contains about 60,000 accessions including more than 250 grape cultivars, aromatic and medicinal plants, trees (apples, pears, nuts, olive trees, figs), vegetables, cereals, pulses and legumes.

There is an ongoing collaboration between IPBGR, Aristotle University (Plant breeding section) and Aegilops for evaluation and breeding of wheat (hard, soft, hulled) varieties under organic conditions. The cereal field at the IPBGR, is not certified organic but managed under organic conditions for 10 years. The University of Thessaloniki is doing organic breeding research. They work on cereals, legumes, vegetables and aromatic crops.

6. Obstacles and opportunities

The main problem is that many organic farmers in Greece only grow organic for the European subsidies. They sell their organic products on the conventional market and are not interested in organic seed. In addition, some farmers are subsistence farmers who certify for instance their old orchards to get subsidies.

Another obstacle is the fact that farmers do not see the difference between conventional and organic seed. They do not see the advantage of using certified organic seeds. The price of the seeds is higher, and the final organic product is the same.

There is a lack of trust between farmers and the gene bank because farmers are not sure that they receive the seed they asked for.

According to some researchers the quality of organic seeds might also be an issue; in some tests (germination, disease, etc.) organic seeds were performing worse than conventional seeds.

Greek seed producers that used to produce organic seeds stopped because they found no market for their seeds. At the same time farmers that do want to use organic seeds have difficulties to find them because the seed database is empty.

It takes a lot of administration for farmers to receive a derogation to use conventional seeds even when there are no organic seeds available at all.

One opportunity is the fact that, due to the derogation policy, there is a good overview of the potential demand for organic seed for each crop. Since derogations are only granted for the area of cultivation the total amount of derogations gives a clear indication of the amount of organic seed that is missing. Another opportunity is that the IPBGR is willing to invest in organic breeding if there is a clear demand from organic farmers and if it will be possible to register organic varieties.

7. Recommendations from the stakeholders

- Remove the quantity of organic seed per variety from the database;
- Make it easier for seed suppliers to put their seed offer on the organic seed database;
- Improve the database so it is interesting for farmers to use it;

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- Develop a definition for organic bred varieties, so they can be registered;
- Provide training for farmers to become a registered organic seed producer;
- Create a market for organic seed. Once there is some seed on the database Greek companies might think: "There is a market for organic seed, we need to invest in this otherwise the money goes somewhere else."
- Invest in local seed production.
- Subsidise the use of organic seed for a limited period of time.
- Reduce the price difference between conventional and organic seed. A price difference of 10% is acceptable.
- Inform farmers about the advantages of organic seed.
- Invest in organic breeding and organic field trials

8. More information

Greek seed database:
www.minagric.gr/biologiki/biologikh.aspx

National legislation for organic farming:
http://www.minagric.gr/index.php/el/for-farmer-2/biologikgeorgiaktinotrofia

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