

# Handout: Capacity Building on European Seed Policy and Legislation

## Opportunities for Advocacy in Support of Diversity-Friendly Seed Legislation

The next six months present a critical window for influencing the EU sPRM marketing reform to support agricultural diversity. This chapter outlines practical advocacy steps and approaches to empower participants in advocating effectively for a diversity-friendly seed law. With coordinated actions, supporters can work to protect the rights of farmers and small-scale seed producers, prevent biodiversity loss, and shape policies that reflect the values of local and resilient food systems. This capacity-building section offers guidance on actionable steps, resources, and messaging strategies to amplify voices and impact.

### 1. Reach Out to Your Agriculture Ministry

Engaging directly with national policymakers is essential, particularly as the Council of EU Agriculture Ministers plays a central role in finalizing the legislation. Here's how to get involved:

- **Identify the Key Contacts:** Research to identify officials within the Agriculture Ministry who are responsible for the seed legislation file. This might involve liaising with the Ministry's office or using resources from advocacy networks.
- **Send Information or Request a Meeting:** Reach out to these contacts by sending relevant information about the risks posed by the current legislation to diversity, and ask for a meeting to discuss these concerns in person.
- **Provide Specific Feedback and Examples:** Prepare concrete examples and data that illustrate the potential threats of the legislation to biodiversity, especially around:
  - Increased administrative burdens on small-scale farmers and seed producers.
  - Lack of a third-party appeals process in the variety registration decision, which limits accountability and stakeholder influence.

### 2. Support the "Raise Our Forks – for Diversity!" Petition

The "Raise Our Forks" petition is a powerful tool to show widespread support for diversity-friendly seed policies. Here's how you can help amplify its impact:

- **Share the Petition Widely:** Use social media, newsletters, or community platforms to share the petition link. Aim to mobilize broad support to reach the goal of 200,000 signatures by the end of the year.
- **Request Advocacy Materials:** Contact the petition organizers for flyers, graphics, text, and social media posts to make it easier to promote. Tailoring materials to local contexts can also improve engagement.
- **Become a Supporting Organization:** Organizations can lend greater visibility to the petition by formally endorsing it, strengthening its collective influence on policymakers.

### 3. Organize a Joint Letter to EU Decision Makers

A coordinated approach can help emphasize the need for diversity-friendly seed policies. Here's how to contribute to a joint letter campaign:

- **Participate in a Joint Letter:** Support a letter addressed to new Members of the European Parliament, national ministers, and eventually new EU Commissioners. The letter will express collective concerns, using the petition’s text as its foundation.
- **Encourage Broad Organizational Support:** Aim to involve over 100 organizations in endorsing the letter, enhancing its credibility and visibility.
- **Highlight Relevant Resources:** Consider including powerful resources, such as the book “[Eating to Extinction](#),” which discusses the importance of seed diversity, to provide policymakers with additional context on the issue.

#### 4. Plan a Petition Handover Event with the Agriculture Ministry

Organizing an event to present the petition’s demands to the Agriculture Ministry is a valuable advocacy milestone. This can strengthen the message and garner media attention:

- **Arrange a Meeting with Key Officials:** Aim to meet with the Agriculture Minister or senior advisors to personally hand over the petition and discuss its demands.
- **Engage with Media and Social Media:** Increase visibility for the handover event through press releases and social media posts. Documenting the event publicly can inspire further support and signal strong community backing.

#### 5. Conduct Interviews with Small Seed Producers

To build a compelling case for policy changes, gathering testimonials and data from those most affected—small seed producers—will be essential. Here’s how to approach this:

- **Distribute a Survey:** Share a survey (available in English, German, French and Spanish) to collect feedback from small seed producers about the administrative burdens they face under current regulations.
- **Conduct Interviews:** Use the survey responses to guide one-on-one interviews. Gather qualitative data, such as personal stories and specific challenges, which can provide authentic, relatable content for advocacy.
- **Utilize Data in Advocacy:** The data gathered can support advocacy work by highlighting real impacts on small seed producers. This can be integrated into social media posts, public statements, and media outreach campaigns.

#### 6. Strategic Focus on the Council

The Council is a key institution in the PRM legislation process. Advocacy efforts should therefore focus on this group to maximize influence over the final outcome:

- **Coordinate Member State Actions:** Mobilize targeted activities within as many EU Member States as possible. Organize national-level events, public forums, or meetings with ministers to ensure that voices from diverse regions are heard.
- **Build an Effective Outreach Strategy:** Tailor outreach approaches to have the greatest impact on policymakers, such as highlighting biodiversity concerns or emphasizing public support for local seed diversity.
- **Plan High-Impact Advocacy Activities:** Brainstorm impactful activities, such as public awareness campaigns, petitions, or social media drives, that can draw attention from both national and EU-level

decision-makers. Leveraging the collective power of advocates across multiple Member States can make a significant difference.

The EU PRM reform presents both risks and opportunities for agricultural diversity. By taking strategic advocacy actions, participants can help shape the legislation in a way that aligns with values of diversity, sustainability, and resilience. This training module provides tools and pathways for effective advocacy that empower individuals, organizations, and communities to engage with the EU policymaking process. With concerted efforts over the coming months, it's possible to achieve meaningful changes that will safeguard biodiversity and strengthen agricultural systems for the future.