LiveSeeding

Training materials for organic seed and breeding entrepreneurship training centre

Authors: María Carrascosa (RMAe)

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Contact	María Carrascosa, maria@municipiosagroeco.red

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History of changes

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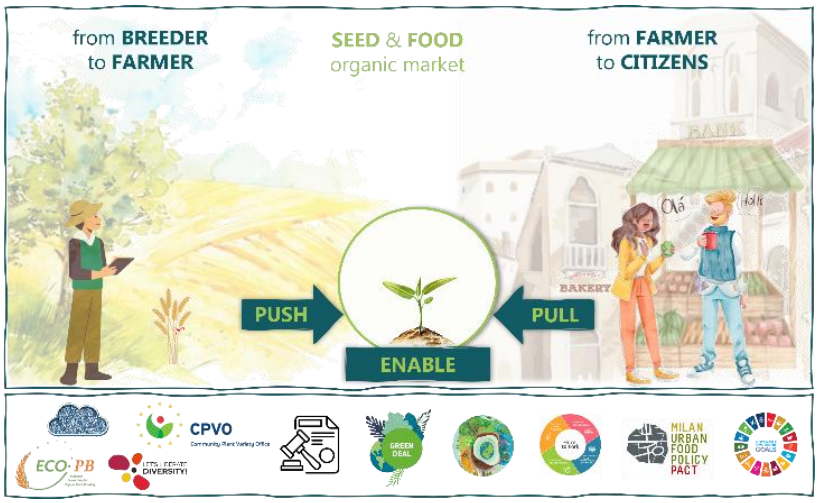
LiveSeeding - Organic seed and plant breeding to accelerate sustainable and diverse food systems in Europe *is a 4-year Innovation Action funded by the European Union, the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). The project started in October 2022 and brings together 37 organisations operating in 16 European countries. LiveSeeding provides science-based evidence and best practice solutions to help achieve 100 % organic seed.*

LiveSeeding contributes to the transition towards environmentally-friendly, climate-neutral, healthy and fair food systems through a ***PUSH-PULL-ENABLE strategy*** *to*

- enhance the availability and adequacy of organic seeds of cultivars appropriate to organic farming (PUSH),
- increase and stabilise the market demand for organic seeds of cultivars appropriate to organic farming (PULL),
- foster an enabling policy and regulatory environment where both demand and supply can harmoniously and productively negotiate without irrelevant constraints due to legal restrictions and/or regulatory fragmentation (ENABLE).



LiveSeeding addresses the topics in a ***holistic multi-actor***, ***multi-stakeholder***, ***participatory approach*** *involving stakeholders along the value chain in 17 local* ***Living Labs*** *(LLs) and 3 established networks of organic breeders (****ECO-PB****), seed savers (****ECLLD****) and Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (****MUFPP****). 15 European countries cover the different pedoclimatic zones and socio-economic contexts, including countries with a low level of development in organic seed and breeding in East and South Europe.*

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Summary

This deliverable presents the training materials developed under Task 5.4 of the LiveSeeding project, which focuses on strengthening **entrepreneurship in the organic seed and plant breeding sector**. The training activities respond to the need to build capacities to work towards the EU objective of achieving the full use of organic plant reproductive material in organic farming by 2036 and address the need to consolidate viable, resilient and market-oriented organic seed and breeding initiatives across Europe.

Organic seed and breeding initiatives, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, continue to face structural challenges such as fragmented markets, limited access to finance, regulatory uncertainty and insufficient visibility and recognition of organic and biodiversity-based varieties. Task 5.4 addresses these challenges through a dedicated capacity-building pathway that places entrepreneurship at the centre of the transition towards sustainable and diverse organic seed systems.

The training activities are implemented within the framework of the *LiveSeeding Organic Seed and Breeding Entrepreneurship Training Centre*, which combines European-level online webinars, national on-site trainings and the *Entrepreneurship Focal Point*. This integrated approach is designed to support both existing initiatives seeking to strengthen their business strategies and actors interested in entering the organic seed and breeding sector, with particular attention to organic farmers and SME managers involved in breeding, seed production, and marketing.

Deliverable D5.3 documents **five training modules**, each structured into one or several units and together forming a coherent and progressive learning pathway for easy replication and dissemination, and ultimately greater impact of the knowledge and skills developed in the context of the project.

The materials for each module are available on Organic Eprint as follows:

Module 23 – Understanding the European Context for Organic Seed and Plant Breeding Entrepreneurship

Organic Eprint link: https://orgprints.org/56624

Module 24 – Stakeholder Engagement

Organic Eprint link: https://orgprints.org/56639

Module 25 – Building and Positioning Organic Seed and Breeding Enterprises

Organic Eprint link: https://orgprints.org/56640

Module 26 – Funding Opportunities for Entrepreneurs in the Organic Seeds and Breeding Sector

Organic Eprint link: https://orgprints.org/56641

Module 27 – Lessons Learned from Successful Initiatives in the Organic Seed and Breeding Sector

Organic Eprint link: https://orgprints.org/56643

The training methodology combines expert inputs, panel discussions, case-based learning and interactive exchanges, delivered through online and on-site formats and is based on a training outline and format common to all LiveSeeding training deliverables and materials, which was developed by the project Training Task Force (T7.2). At the time of submission of this deliverable, two European webinars and one national training in Spain have been completed, with additional activities planned in other countries.

Deliverable D5.3 consolidates all training resources generated under Task 5.4, including training outlines, presentations, complementary reference materials and audiovisual content. These materials are designed to be modular, reusable and adaptable and are being made publicly available through the Organic EPrints repository to ensure long-term accessibility and impact beyond the duration of the project.

By structuring and disseminating these materials, Deliverable D5.3 contributes to strengthening entrepreneurial capacities in the organic seed and breeding sector and supports the wider objectives of LiveSeeding to foster resilient, economically viable and biodiversity-based organic seed systems in Europe.

1. Justification, scope and main objectives

The European Union defined the objective to achieve the full use of organic plant reproductive material in organic farming by 2036, in Regulation (EU) 2018/848.. While regulatory developments set a clear direction, achieving this objective in practice requires not only an adequate supply of organic seed but also the consolidation of viable entrepreneurial initiatives capable of producing, breeding and marketing organic plant reproductive material adapted to organic and agroecology-oriented farming and food systems.

Across Europe, organic seed and breeding businesses, especially the medium and small ones, continue to face structural challenges that limit their proliferation and scaling up. These include fragmented markets, limited financial resources, regulatory uncertainty, weak market positioning, and insufficient visibility and recognition of organic and biodiversity-based varieties. Many existing initiatives struggle to consolidate their business models, while potential new entrants lack access to tailored knowledge, resources, tools and support pathways to engage in entrepreneurial activities within this highly specialised sector.

Scope:

The scope of the training materials part of the present deliverable is set to **strengthen entrepreneurial capacities within the organic seed and plant breeding sector**. Developed under Task 5.4, the training materials are designed to support the transition towards 100% organic plant reproductive material by equipping existing and emerging initiatives with the economic, organisational and strategic knowledge needed to operate sustainably. Rather than concentrating solely on regulatory aspects, the materials focus on entrepreneurship as a central dimension of viable and resilient organic seed systems, capable of responding to farmers', citizens' and market needs.

The training materials specifically address the knowledge and skill gaps faced by actors seeking to initiate, consolidate or scale entrepreneurial activities in organic seed and breeding. They provide practical tools, case-based insights and strategic guidance on business development, value proposition definition,

sustainable business models, access to funding, and marketing, communication and visibility strategies. By tackling these non-agrarian bottlenecks—often as constraining as technical breeding challenges—the materials aim to strengthen the overall viability and impact of organic seed and breeding initiatives.
The scope of T5.4 is implemented through the LiveSeeding Organic Seed and Breeding Entrepreneurship Training Centre, which structures and delivers the training materials through three complementary and mutually reinforcing components: National Trainings, European Webinars and the Entrepreneurship Focal Point.

Target group/audience:
The training activities are designed to reach both existing businesses seeking to improve or adapt their strategy and individuals or organisations aiming to enter the organic seed and breeding sector. Particular attention is given to organic farmers and managers of small and medium-sized enterprises involved in the production, breeding or marketing of organic seeds and seedlings, as well as to actors developing organic breeding activities.
The training pathway is also relevant for those transitioning from conventional seed systems towards organic and agroecological models. From a crop perspective, the activities address initiatives working on different crop types, with a particular focus on arable crops and vegetables. At varietal level, special attention is paid to organic heterogeneous material, open-pollinated varieties, local and traditional varieties, and participatory plant breeding approaches.

Deliverable **D5.3 – Training materials for the organic seed and breeding entrepreneurship training centre** consolidates all resources generated under Task 5.4, including training content, methodological materials and supporting documentation. By making these materials accessible and structured, the deliverable contributes to the reusability and replication of the training pathway beyond the lifetime of the project, thereby reinforcing the long-term impact of LiveSeeding on the development of resilient organic seed and breeding systems.

2. Training methodology, structure and modules description

The training activities developed under Task 5.4 are based on a **participatory and needs-driven methodology** jointly designed by the partners involved in the task. The definition of training topics, formats and target groups was carried out collaboratively, with the objective of adapting the content as closely as possible to the real needs and challenges faced by existing and emerging initiatives in the organic seed and plant breeding sector. This joint design process also supported the dissemination of the training activities and helped to reach participants with a concrete interest in the online and on-site sessions.

The training methodology **combines expert input with interactive formats** and was implemented through conferences, moderated panels, roundtables and facilitated discussions, delivered both online and on site. The sessions were led by experienced practitioners and experts from the sector. To ensure coherence and alignment with the learning objectives of each unit and module, trainers were provided in advance with a clear structure outlining the key points to be addressed in their contributions. In addition, facilitators prepared guiding questions for each intervention to support a focused discussion and to ensure that all relevant aspects were covered. Each session included dedicated time for participant interaction, with questions and comments collected both orally and through the chat. In the case of the first EU webinar, interpretation into Spanish was provided, as the majority of participants were based in Spain, thereby facilitating comprehension and active participation.

After each training activity, all supporting materials, including presentations and audiovisual resources, were shared with participants together with an evaluation survey, allowing feedback to be collected and used to improve subsequent training actions.

This deliverable is organised into **five training modules**, each structured into several units. Each module includes a detailed training outline defining its scope, learning objectives, target groups, units, duration and supporting learning materials. Together, the modules form a coherent training pathway

addressing the main strategic, regulatory, organisational and economic dimensions of entrepreneurship in the organic seed and plant breeding sector.

Module 23 – Understanding the European Context for Organic Seed and Plant Breeding Entrepreneurship

provides an overview of the European socioeconomic, market and regulatory framework shaping the sector. It is structured into six units covering: 1) an introduction to the LiveSeeding project and its training framework; 2) the EU organic seed regulation and its practical implications; 3) & 4) an analysis of the structure and diversity of organic seed and breeding initiatives in Europe in two complementary parts; 5) & 6) and a two-part overview of the ongoing revision of EU legislation on plant reproductive material, including developments at European Parliament and Council level.

By combining sectoral analysis and policy developments, the module establishes a common reference framework that allows participants to better situate their initiatives within the European ecosystem.

Module 24 – Stakeholder Engagement

focuses on strengthening collaboration and community building within the organic seed and breeding sector. Through two interactive units, the module captures: 1) shared needs, challenges and good practices identified by participants; 2) fosters exchange and networking through facilitated discussions and speed networking formats.

Module 25 – Building and Positioning Organic Seed and Breeding Enterprises addresses entrepreneurship as a practical pathway to create, consolidate and scale organic seed and plant breeding initiatives. Structured into four units, the module covers: 1) core entrepreneurial concepts and strategies, including the distinction between business models and business plans, and introduces applied tools such as the Business Model Canvas; 2) business model design for organic seed and breeding initiatives; 3) marketing and communication for resilient businesses; 4) label strategies to enhance visibility and trust.

Module 26 – Funding Opportunities for Entrepreneurs in the Organic Seeds and Breeding Sector

focuses on how organic seed and breeding initiatives can access and combine funding sources to support different stages of enterprise development. The module is structured into two units addressing: 1)how to present entrepreneurial projects to funders and donors; 2)an overview of public and private funding pathways, including EU-level frameworks, national CAP Strategic Plans, local support mechanisms and private funding options. It supports participants in identifying suitable funding instruments and in aligning funding strategies with enterprise needs and impact objectives.

Module 27 – Lessons Learned from Successful Initiatives in the Organic Seed and Breeding Sector

systematises key lessons drawn from concrete entrepreneurial experiences across different segments of the sector. Structured into five units, the module examines: 1) strategic insights from a well-established European organic seed SME; 2) commercial strategies of a medium-sized Spanish seed company operating in organic and conventional markets; 3) the specificities of local organic nurseries; 4) the valorisation of cultivated biodiversity by micro-scale seed initiatives; 5) a concluding synthesis of systemic challenges and enabling conditions for scaling organic seed and breeding systems.

The modules documented in this deliverable were implemented through a combination of European-level online webinars and national on-site training activities. At the time of submission, two EU webinars and one national training in Spain have been completed. The training materials are designed to be modular, reusable and adaptable, allowing their replication and further use beyond the duration of the project. The development of the common training outline and learning methodology was led by María Carrascosa (RMAe), with support from T5.4 partners.

The scope of T5.4 is defined by the LiveSeeding Organic Seed and Breeding Entrepreneurship Training Centre, which structures and delivers the training

materials through three complementary and mutually reinforcing components: National Trainings, European Webinars and the Entrepreneurship Focal Point.

European Webinars are a core component of the Training Centre, addressing cross-cutting entrepreneurship issues at EU level through four thematic sessions on organic seed and breeding entrepreneurship, marketing, governance and financing, and business model development. Two webinars have already been delivered, with the remaining sessions scheduled for the final phase of the task, together forming a coherent learning pathway covering strategic, market, organisational and financial aspects.

National Trainings complement the European webinars through on-site sessions delivered in national languages in several participating countries. Implemented under a shared methodological framework, these trainings contextualise European-level content to national realities, foster peer exchange and strengthen local entrepreneurial ecosystems.

The Entrepreneurship Focal Point forms the third pillar of the Training Centre and focuses on the administrative, legal and financial conditions for establishing and consolidating organic seed and breeding enterprises. Its main output, the National Counselling Plans, outlines key actions and support mechanisms to strengthen business performance and the enabling environment for entrepreneurship, while also serving as tools for policy dialogue and advocacy.

All training modules have a common training outline that clearly identifies the scope of the training, the learning objectives and target audience, the learning modalities, methodology and materials, as well as the learning assessment method.

The training outline and the modular approach have been developed as a common approach for all training materials and training-related deliverables in the project (each work package as a training task) in order to create better learning paths that can support knowledge transfer and can also ensure easy replicability of trainings. The modular approach also allows to create new trainings in the future that make use of individual modules or units from various work packages in order to create new trainings targeted to specific groups and learning needs.

The framing of common training outline and the learning methodology has been curated by Stephanie Mothes (ITAB, FR) with the support of Mariano Iossa (FiBL Europe) and Francesca Gori (RSR) within the work of the Training Task Force (T7.2).

3. Training Modules

3.1. Module 23 – Understanding the European Context for Organic Seed and Plant Breeding Entrepreneurship

Topics

This module provides an overview of the current socioeconomic, market and regulatory context shaping entrepreneurship in the organic seed and plant breeding sector in Europe. It combines project-level insights, sectoral analysis and policy developments to offer a consolidated picture of the ecosystem in which organic seed initiatives operate.

The module introduces the LiveSeeding project and its Organic Seed and Breeding Entrepreneurship Training Centre, situating the training within the broader capacity-building strategy of the project. This introduction establishes a common reference framework for the module and clarifies how the training activities respond to identified sectoral needs.

It then analyses the structure and diversity of organic seed production, breeding and trading initiatives across Europe, with particular attention to small and medium-sized enterprises and to organic heterogeneous material, open-pollinated, local and traditional varieties, as well as participatory plant breeding approaches. This analysis is developed through a two-part overview that combines quantitative insights and qualitative reflections on structural bottlenecks, market dynamics and communication challenges.

Finally, the module addresses the EU organic regulation concerning seeds and breeding and the ongoing revision of the EU regulatory framework on plant reproductive material, covering both the European Commission proposal and subsequent developments at European Parliament and Council level, and examining their implications for organic seed systems, market access and entrepreneurial strategies.

Target groups

This module is addressed to actors interested in understanding the European framework within which organic seed and plant breeding initiatives operate. It is particularly relevant for organic farmers, seed producers, plant breeders and managers of small and medium-sized enterprises involved in the production, breeding or marketing of organic seeds and seedlings.

It also targets professionals and organisations engaged in breeding programmes, seed governance, advisory services and innovation support within organic food systems. From a crop perspective, the module is relevant for initiatives working with a wide range of crops, with a specific focus on arable crops and vegetables, and on organic heterogeneous material, open-pollinated varieties, local and traditional varieties and participatory plant breeding.

Learning objectives

By the end of this module, participants will have developed a clearer understanding of the European context in which organic seed and breeding entrepreneurship takes place, including the main structural characteristics and current dynamics of the sector.

Participants will strengthen their knowledge of the diversity and functioning of small and medium organic seed and breeding initiatives in Europe, including differences in organisational models, value chain positioning, market constraints and communication-related challenges, as well as emerging opportunities linked to organic breeding and differentiated market strategies.

They will also improve their understanding of the organic seeds EU regulation and the ongoing EU regulatory process on plant reproductive material, from the initial European Commission proposal to the positions adopted by the European Parliament and discussed within the Council, and will be better able to assess the potential implications of these developments for organic seed production, breeding and marketing.

Units

Unit 1: Introduction to LiveSeeding project and its Organic Seed and Breeding Entrepreneurship Training Center (10 min).

This unit introduces the LiveSeeding project and its dedicated EU Training Programme on organic seed and breeding entrepreneurship. It explains the objectives, scope, and structure of the training activities developed under Task 5.4, including European webinars, national trainings, and the National Counselling Plan. The unit clarifies how the first webinar fits within the overall training pathway and presents the structure and objectives of the module.

In addition, practical information is provided to ensure smooth participation, including guidance on the use of the online platform, interpretation services, and interactive tools. This unit establishes a shared understanding of the training framework and prepares participants for the thematic content of the module.

Unit 2. EU organic seeds regulation (40 min)

The unit highlights the complexity of the current regulatory environment and its implications for producers, seed companies, and organic farmers in the Spanish context. It examines the introduction of organic heterogeneous material as a new regulatory category and clarifies requirements related to certification, traceability, and notification.

Special attention is given to the persistent gap between regulatory objectives and market reality, notably the limited availability of organic seed and planting material. The session reviews mechanisms such as national databases, individual and general derogations, and the obligation for Member States to monitor and promote organic seed use. The unit also addresses the specific constraints affecting seedlings and perennial crops, underlining how regulatory tools both support and limit the expansion of organic seed supply.

Unit 3: Insights of the organic seeds and breeding sector in Europe. Part I (24 min)

This unit explores the current landscape of organic seed production, breeding, and trading initiatives across Europe, with a focus on small and medium-sized actors. Drawing on the main outputs of Task 5.1 Analysis of the bottlenecks and

opportunities of the organic seed market and cultivar testing network market, it presents an overview of existing business models, organisational structures, and value chain roles within the organic seed sector.
Special attention is given to organic heterogeneous material, open-pollinated varieties, local and traditional varieties, and participatory plant breeding initiatives, highlighting their relevance for agroecological transitions and market differentiation. The unit provides participants with concrete insights into the diversity of approaches currently shaping the sector and helps them position their own initiatives within the wider European ecosystem.

Unit 4: Insights of the organic seeds and breeding sector in Europe. Part II (40 min)

This unit provides an overview of the organic seed and breeding sector in Europe, highlighting both its potential and its structural limitations. It addresses the diversity of existing initiatives and the persistent gaps in organic seed availability and use at farm level. The unit emphasises the challenges faced by SMEs, including limited resources, market fragmentation, and slow adoption of organic seed. It also underlines the importance of participatory plant breeding and farmer involvement, while pointing out that marketing and communication bottlenecks are as critical as technical breeding challenges for sector development.

Unit 5: Revision of EU legislation on plant reproductive material. Part I (18 min)

This unit presents an overview of the ongoing revision of the European Union legislation on plant reproductive material. It outlines the main elements of the European Commission's proposal, the institutions involved in the legislative process, and the expected timeline for adoption and implementation.
The unit focuses on the implications of the proposed regulation for organic seed production and breeding, including market access, variety registration, and innovation pathways. By clarifying the regulatory context, the unit enables participants to better anticipate future challenges and opportunities and to

understand how policy developments may influence entrepreneurial strategies in the organic seed sector.

Unit 6. Revision of EU legislation on plant reproductive material. Part II (18 min)

This unit presents an update on the ongoing revision of EU legislation on Plant Reproductive Material, focusing on its relevance for organic seed and breeding initiatives. It explains the state of the regulatory process at the time of the training, including the presentation of the European Parliament's proposal and the main discussions taking place within the Council. The unit highlights the uncertainties this process creates for organic seed enterprises and the risk that future regulation may favour larger actors unless the specific needs of the organic sector are adequately taken into account.

Learning material

You can find the learning material for module 23 here: **https://orgprints.org/56624**

List of materials:

- Powerpoint presentation, title, to (unit 1)
- EC regularion as further reading

The module is supported by dedicated PowerPoint presentations. During the session an online poll was used to collect information on participants' profiles and expectations, contributing to the interactive dimension of the training and to documenting stakeholder diversity within the sector. Oral references and examples shared during the discussions further complemented the material.
Key reference documentation included:

- The European Commission proposal for a Regulation on the production and marketing of plant reproductive material:
- The European Parliament legislative resolution of 24 April 2024

These documents provide an updated policy framework relevant to organic seed and breeding initiatives.

3.2. Module 24 - Stakeholder Engagement

Topics

This module focuses on stakeholder engagement as a key element for strengthening organic seed and breeding initiatives. Through interactive formats, it captures shared needs, challenges collective reflections and practices identified by participants and fosters exchange, mutual learning and community building within the sector.

Target groups

This module is aimed at actors interested in strengthening collaboration and exchange within the organic seed and plant breeding sector. It is particularly relevant for organic farmers, seed producers, plant breeders and managers of small and medium-sized enterprises involved in organic seed production and marketing, as well as for advisors and support organisations working with these initiatives.

Learning objectives

By the end of this module, participants will be able to identify common constraints affecting stakeholder engagement, such as limited communication resources and fragmented markets, as well as positive practices that support collaboration and trust-building. The module also aims to strengthen participants' capacity to engage with peers and to recognise the value of collective exchange and networking for the development of organic seed systems.

Units

Unit 1: Speed Networking and Community Building (30 min)

This interactive unit fosters mutual learning and connection through a speed networking format in small groups. Participants introduce their initiatives, share

experiences and identify potential synergies. The unit also promotes engagement with the LiveSeeding Stakeholders Group as a space for continued exchange beyond the training.

Unit 2. Let's Interact: Shared Needs, Challenges, and Practices (60 min)
This unit captures collective insights emerging from facilitated exchanges among participants. It identifies common needs related to visibility and awareness, key challenges affecting communication and market differentiation, and positive experiences such as local branding initiatives, retailer collaboration and participatory events connecting seeds and food culture.

Learning material

You can find the learning material for module 24 here: **https://orgprints.org/56639**

List of materials:

- Training Outline - Module 24
- Training video for Unit 1: Speed Networking and Community Building
- Training video for Unit 2: Let's Interact: Shared Needs, Challenges, and Practices

Each unit was supported by interactive online tools, including polls used to map participant profiles and stakeholder typologies and to encourage active engagement throughout the module.

3.3. Module 25 – Building and Positioning Organic Seed and Breeding Enterprises

Topics

This module addresses entrepreneurship as a practical pathway to create, consolidate and scale organic seed production and plant breeding initiatives in Europe. It connects strategic and organisational choices with market realities, including how initiatives define their value proposition, select viable channels, mobilise resources and manage risks when developing an SME in the organic seed and breeding sector.

The module clarifies core entrepreneurial concepts, distinguishing business models from business plans, and introduces applied tools such as the Business Model Canvas to support strategic design and decision making. It also highlights that entrepreneurship in this sector depends on interaction across the value chain and on the capacity to align technical development with market uptake. Particular attention is given to impact oriented entrepreneurship, encouraging participants to consider social, environmental and territorial outcomes alongside economic performance.

Finally, the module integrates market positioning components that directly affect enterprise viability: marketing and communication strategies to build demand and trust, and label approaches that can strengthen credibility and recognition for organic and biodiversity-oriented seed initiatives.

Target groups

The module is designed for actors who are developing or strengthening entrepreneurial initiatives in organic seeds and plant breeding, including early-stage projects assessing feasibility and established SMEs refining their strategy or preparing to scale. Participants benefit from having a basic understanding of organic seed systems and an interest in strategic, organisational and economic decision making.

Learning objectives

By the end of the module, participants strengthen their ability to frame organic seed and breeding initiatives as entrepreneurial projects, clarifying which strategic decisions are required at different stages of enterprise development and which common pitfalls should be avoided. They improve their understanding of how to design or adjust business models and business plans, using structured tools such as the Business Model Canvas to articulate value propositions, customer segments, channels, key resources and cost structures. Participants also develop a more applied capacity to assess opportunities, bottlenecks and risks affecting organic seed and breeding SMEs, including market and value chain constraints, resource needs and funding conditions. In addition, the module supports participants in identifying concrete marketing, communication and visibility actions that help generate demand and build long term trust, including how to communicate cultivated biodiversity in accessible narratives. Finally, participants gain awareness of label strategies and support mechanisms, including incubation and advisory services, that can reinforce credibility and accelerate entrepreneurial progress.

Units

Unit 1: Introduction to Entrepreneurship in the Organic Seed and Breeding Sector: Models, Strategies, and Impacts (1 hour 17 min).

Delivered as a moderated panel format, this unit frames entrepreneurship as a dynamic process shaped by interaction across the organic seed value chain. It clarifies foundational concepts by distinguishing business models from business plans and introduces the Business Model Canvas as a practical tool to structure strategic choices in both start up and scale up phases.

The unit consolidates key considerations for building or expanding an organic seed and breeding SME: how to sequence decisions, anticipate common challenges and identify where to seek solutions when constraints emerge. It addresses organisational model options and trade-offs, resource requirements such as infrastructure, knowledge, staff and finance, and the basics of

valorisation strategy through channels, end users and cost logic. Impact oriented entrepreneurship is also emphasised, encouraging reflection on how social and environmental goals and solidarity-based economy principles can be integrated beyond economic viability, including through governance and partnership choices.

Unit 2. Business Models for Organic Seed and Breeding Initiatives (60 min)
This unit examines business model typologies relevant to organic seed and breeding initiatives and translates them into concrete strategic components that participants can apply to their own enterprises. The discussion focuses on how initiatives define a unique selling proposition, identify and prioritise customer groups, select distribution channels and assess profitability and funding options.
The unit highlights that market positioning is not static: initiatives often need to refine their customer focus, adjust channels and strengthen differentiation narratives as they grow or face changing demand. It also reinforces that marketing bottlenecks can be as limiting as technical constraints, and that resilient business models typically combine clear governance, consistent communication and active relationship building with farmers and value chain partners.

Unit 3. Marketing and communication for resilient organic seeds and breeding business (1 hour and 30 min)
This unit addresses marketing and communication as two complementary and strategic dimensions for strengthening the resilience of organic seed and plant breeding initiatives. Drawing on expert inputs and concrete experiences from different organisations, the unit explores how initiatives can generate demand while simultaneously building trust and long-term relationships with farmers, partners, and consumers.
The unit clarifies the distinction between marketing as a set of actions aimed at reaching specific customer segments and generating sales, and communication as a broader process of conveying values, identity, and credibility. Particular attention is given to the importance of defining clear value propositions,

maintaining a coherent brand identity, and selecting communication channels that are adapted to the size, resources, and objectives of each initiative.
Participants are encouraged to reflect on the challenges of communicating the value of organic varieties and cultivated biodiversity, recognising that technical arguments alone are often insufficient. The discussions highlight that messages connected to food quality, taste, health, locality, and food culture tend to resonate more effectively with both farmers and end consumers. The unit also introduces practical approaches such as inbound marketing, digital presence, and the use of simple metrics to assess the effectiveness of marketing and communication efforts. Overall, the unit provides concrete insights into how strategic marketing and communication can support both economic viability and the broader societal goals of organic seed and breeding initiatives.

Unit 4: Label Strategies to Enhance Visibility and Trust (70 min)
This unit analyses labels as strategic tools that can increase credibility, recognition and market positioning for organic and biodiversity-oriented seed and breeding initiatives. It explores how labels can function as interfaces between producers, breeders, wholesalers, retailers and consumers, and what governance, quality control and sustainability conditions are required to maintain trust.
The unit also addresses typical implementation challenges, including defining rules for label use, ensuring financial sustainability of label management and balancing conservation objectives with market development. A comparative perspective is used to show that label effectiveness depends on alignment between the label promise, the underlying production and breeding practices and the communication strategy used to make the label meaningful to target audiences.

Learning material

You can find the learning material for module 25 here: https://orgprints.org/56640

List of materials:

- Training outline - Module 25 (Word document)
- Presentation (in pdf format) of Unit 1: Ana-Marija Špicnagel and Federico Fabbri - Entrepreneurship in the organic seeds and breeding sector
- Video training for Unit 1: Ana-Marija Špicnagel and Federico Fabbri - Entrepreneurship in the organic seeds and breeding sector
- Presentation (in ppt format) for Unit 2: Panel discussion, Organic is future: business models for organic seeds and breeding
- Presentation (in pdf format) for Unit 2: Gebhard Rossmanith - Bingenheimer saatgut
- Video for Unit 2: - Panel discussion, Organic is future: business models for organic seeds and breeding
- Presentation (in ppt format) for Unit 3: Mariateresa Lazzaro - Challenges in communicating about organic seeds & organic breeding
- Presentation (in pdf format) for Unit 3: Stefan Doeblin - Living Seeds Sementes Vivas SA Organic & biodynamic seeds
- Presentation (in ppt format) for Unit 3: Carl Vollenweider - BioSaat GmbH
- Presentation (in ppt format) for Unit 3: Andrea Ghedina - Marketing and communication for resilient organic seeds and breeding business
- Presentation (in ppt format) for Unit 3: Sebastià Grimalt Mascaró - Association of Local Varieties of Mallorca
- Video for Unit 3: Panel discussion, Marketing and communication for resilient organic seeds and breeding business
- Presentation (in ppt format) for Unit 4: Philipp Holzherr - DIVERSIFOOD Label Evaluation Matrix
- Presentation (in pdf format) for Unit 4: Justine Lipke - bioverita - Organic right from the start
- Presentation (in ppt format) for Unit 4: Francesca Gori - The OHM logo by Rete Semi Rurali in Italy
- Presentation (in pdf format) for Unit 4: Diversifood Label Evaluation Matrix
- Video for Unit 4: Panel: label strategies to enhance visibility

Videos and presentations need to be used together.

Key complementary documents include:

- LiveSeeding Deliverable D5.1 Report on bottlenecks and opportunities for the horizontal proliferation and scaling-up of the organic seeds and cultivar testing network: https://orgprints.org/id/eprint/56471/
- Diversifood Label Evaluation Matrix, which is provided here: https://orgprints.org/id/eprint/36406/1/meier-etal-2019-factsheet22-Evaluation-matrix-diversifood.pdf.

3.4. Module 26 – Funding Opportunities for Entrepreneurs in the Organic Seeds and Breeding Sector

Topic

This module focuses on how organic seed and plant breeding initiatives can access and combine funding sources to launch, consolidate or scale their activities. It connects the practical skills required to present a compelling investment case with a structured overview of public and private funding opportunities relevant to the sector.

The module first addresses how to communicate an entrepreneurial project to funders and donors, including how to frame the problem, demonstrate credibility, articulate impact, and present a clear ask. It then explores funding pathways across different levels, from EU policy priorities that influence programme funding, to national CAP Strategic Plans and concrete local support mechanisms, including municipal measures that can unlock early-stage feasibility or scaling steps. The module also examines private funding options, with attention to ethical banking and philanthropic foundations, and helps participants reflect on how different funders assess needs, risks, and impact in the organic seed and breeding field.

Target groups

The module is designed for both existing initiatives seeking to strengthen their funding strategy and emerging entrepreneurs exploring how to finance a new organic seed or breeding project. It is particularly relevant for organic farmers, seed producers, plant breeders and SME managers involved in producing or marketing organic seeds and seedlings, as well as for initiatives developing organic breeding activities.

It also serves organisations that provide support functions to the sector, such as advisory services, incubators, local authorities or value chain partners looking to facilitate access to finance for biodiversity-based seed systems.

Learning objectives

By the end of the module, participants strengthen their capacity to approach funding as a strategic component of enterprise development in the organic seed and breeding sector. They improve their ability to present a business idea in a way that is understandable and attractive to donors and funders, including how to clarify the project's purpose, differentiate its value, demonstrate feasibility, and communicate impact beyond economic results.

Participants also gain a clearer understanding of the main public and private funding channels available to organic seed and breeding SMEs, and how these opportunities relate to broader policy frameworks and market dynamics. Finally, the module supports participants in identifying which funding types are most suitable for different needs and stages, and in considering realistic combinations of instruments, partners and support mechanisms to sustain long-term development.

Units

Unit 1. Pitching an Organic Seed or Breeding Business Idea to Funders and Donors (30 min)

This unit focuses on how to communicate an entrepreneurial idea in a way that resonates with potential funders and donors. It addresses the core elements of a solid pitch, including how to define the problem and solution, articulate a clear value proposition, show evidence of credibility and feasibility, and present a structured funding request.

Emphasis is placed on aligning the pitch with what funders typically look for: clarity of objectives, realistic implementation pathways, risk awareness, and measurable outcomes. The unit also highlights how to frame impact in the organic seed and breeding sector, including contributions to cultivated biodiversity, climate resilience, farmer adoption, local value chains and societal benefits. Participants leave with a clearer sense of what makes a pitch convincing and how to adapt messaging to different types of funders.

Unit 2. Public and Private Funding Pathways for Organic Seed and Breeding SMEs (50 min)

This unit provides an overview of funding opportunities that organic seed and breeding initiatives can mobilise, combining public and private sources. It explores how EU policy priorities shape programme objectives and funding directions, including the EU Organic Action Plan. It then connects these frameworks to national level instruments, with a focus on CAP Strategic Plans and the types of measures that can support organic seed supply, advisory services, innovation, cooperation and investment.

The unit also examines local enabling mechanisms, including municipal support measures, illustrated through a concrete municipal example in Spain. The private funding section highlights ethical banking approaches and foundation support, focusing on how private funders assess objectives, needs, eligibility and risk, and what kinds of projects are typically considered credible. The unit supports participants in comparing funding options, identifying realistic entry points and understanding how to combine instruments to match enterprise development stages.

Learning material

You can find the learning material for module 26 here: https://orgprints.org/56640

The learning material includes PowerPoint presentations supporting each unit and a training outline that consolidates key concepts and learning points. Additional reference materials and links are shared during the interventions.

List of materials:

- Training Outline - Module 26 (Word document)
- Presentation (in pdf format) for Unit 1: How to pitch your business idea to potential funders and donors?
- Video training for Unit 1: How to pitch your business idea to potential funders and donors?

- Unit 2: Ricardo Colmenares - Financing Initiatives: A Biographical and Evolutionary Approach
- Presentation (in pdf format) for Unit 2: Ricardo Colmenares - Financing Initiatives: A Biographical and Evolutionary Approach
- Presentation (in pdf format) for Unit 2: Irati Olaziregi Alberdi - RECOVERY OF LOCAL SEEDS IN ORDUÑA
- Presentation (in pdf format) for Unit 2: Edoardo Nicolini - Impact by investing
- Video training for Unit 2: Opportunities in public and private funding

3.5. Module 27 - Lessons Learned from Successful Initiatives in the Organic Seed and Breeding Sector

Topic

This module documents and systematises key lessons learned from entrepreneurial initiatives operating across different segments of the organic seed and plant breeding sector in Spain and other European contexts. Building on experiences shared during an online and live training session, it combines business case analysis and practitioner-led reflections to examine how initiatives navigate the structural, economic, and organisational challenges shaping the sector.

Rather than presenting abstract models, the module focuses on concrete trajectories, strategic choices and adaptive responses adopted by medium-sized seed companies, small biodiversity-oriented initiatives, and organic nurseries. Special attention is given to economic sustainability, the valorisation of cultivated biodiversity, and coordination among actors within territorial seed systems, particularly in the context of climate change, biodiversity loss, and regulatory pressure.

Target groups

This module is addressed to professionals and organisations seeking to initiate, consolidate, or critically reassess entrepreneurial activities in the organic seed and plant breeding sector in Spain and Europe. It is relevant both for established SMEs aiming to reflect on and adjust their strategic orientation and for individuals exploring realistic entry pathways into the sector.

The module is particularly suited to organic farmers, seed producers, plant breeders, and managers of small and medium-sized enterprises involved in the production, breeding, processing, or commercialisation of organic seeds and seedlings, as well as actors supporting these initiatives through advisory, technical or territorial roles.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, participants gain insight into real diverse entrepreneurial models, including medium-sized seed companies, organic nurseries and small initiatives focused on local and traditional varieties. The module enables participants to identify recurring success factors and structural constraints related to market positioning, diversification strategies, financing mechanisms and coordination with farmers and other value chain actors.
Finally, participants are better equipped to reflect critically on how cultivated biodiversity can be economically valorised while remaining coherent with agroecological principles and long-term sectoral objectives, using concrete examples to inform strategic decision-making within their own initiatives.

Units

Unit 1. Tips from a well-established organic seed and breeding european medium enterprise: strategy, communication and funding (50 min)

This unit draws on experience-sharing from a well-established organic seed and breeding SME, combining structured presentation and facilitated discussion. It focuses on practical lessons related to business strategy, organisational vision, communication choices and funding pathways.
The session illustrates how the initiative has evolved over time, highlighting key strategic decisions, moments of expansion or reorientation, and challenges linked to market competition and investment cycles. Particular attention is given to market positioning, long-term relationships with clients and partners, communication strategies, and the role of funding at different stages of enterprise development.
By grounding the discussion in a real trajectory, the unit enables participants to identify transferable practices, while also recognising that success in the organic seed and breeding sector does not follow a single or linear model.

Unit 2. Commercial strategies of a medium-sized Spanish seed company operating in organic and conventional markets (40 min)

This unit analyses the commercial and organisational strategy of a medium-sized Spanish seed company operating simultaneously in organic and conventional markets. It shows how market demand and customer needs, rather than ideological positioning alone, often drive diversification into organic seed production.

The unit explores portfolio management based on high varietal diversity, combining hybrids, semi-professional varieties and open-pollinated seeds. It examines customer segmentation, distribution channels and internationalisation strategies, highlighting the trade-offs between productivity, diversity and economic viability.

Special attention is given to long investment cycles in breeding, the importance of technical advisory services, and the challenges of scaling organic seed production. Financing strategies are also addressed, including bank loans, subsidies, R&D projects and staff training, illustrating the complexity of maintaining competitiveness while engaging in organic seed production.

Unit 3. Specificities for local organic nurseries success (35 min)

This unit focuses on the strategic intermediary role of organic nurseries between seed producers, farmers and certification bodies. It highlights their contribution to facilitating access to organic seedlings, managing authorisations, and ensuring traceability and regulatory compliance.

The session examines how nurseries operate within tight economic margins while responding to highly diverse, fragmented and small-scale demand. Key themes include flexibility in production volumes, advisory services to farmers, administrative support, and the logistical challenges of producing small batches of multiple varieties.

The unit also addresses market fluctuations, diversification between organic and conventional lines, and coping strategies adopted to maintain service provision to both professional and small-scale farmers, despite declining demand in some regions.

Unit 4. Valorisation of cultivated biodiversity by micro-scale seed initiatives in local markets (60 min)

This unit examines microenterprises specialised in the production and commercialisation of organic seeds of local and traditional varieties. It highlights organisational models based on farmer networks, participatory selection processes and strong territorial anchoring.
The unit analyses how these initiatives integrate conservation, production and market activities, often relying on public support and project-based funding to remain viable. It explores distribution channels, pricing strategies, and the central role of direct sales and online platforms.
Particular attention is given to the economic fragility of biodiversity-oriented seed initiatives, their dependence on subsidies, and the importance of public policies such as regional catalogues, agri-environmental payments and recognition schemes. The unit illustrates how cultural value, storytelling and proximity markets contribute to maintaining cultivated biodiversity despite limited financial margins.

Unit 5. Conclusions: systemic challenges and enabling conditions (15 min)
This concluding unit synthesises the main lessons emerging from the module, emphasising the systemic nature of the challenges facing organic seed and breeding entrepreneurship. It highlights that, while viable and diverse models exist, scaling organic seed and breeding systems requires coordinated action across regulation, markets and public support.
The unit underlines the importance of networks, territorial approaches and policy coherence to progress towards the 2036 objective of full use of organic plant reproductive material, and reinforces the need to align economic viability with biodiversity conservation and agroecological principles.

Learning material

You can find the learning material for module 27 here: https://orgprints.org/56643

The learning material supporting this module includes video recordings published on YouTube, covering the online session, interviews with

participating initiatives, and a summary of the on-site training day. These audiovisual resources are complemented by the PowerPoint presentations used during the sessions, which provide structured content and visual support for the topics addressed. Together, these materials serve as a reference base for participants and facilitate the consolidation and transfer of knowledge generated throughout the training process.

List of materials:

- Training Outline - Module 27 (word document)
- Presentation (in pdf format) for Unit 1:Gebhard Rossmanith - Lessons learned and tips for a success in SME
- Video training for Unit 1: Lessons learned and tips for a success in SME
- Video training for Unit 2: Isabel Montávez - Coordinadora del Departamento Medioambiental de INTERSEMILLAS
- Video training for Unit 3: Juan Andrés Pons - director de Semilleros Cucala
- Video training for Unit 3: Spanish organic nursery Cucala
- Presentation (in pdf format) for Unit 4: Ernest Tasias, Les Refardes
- Presentation (in ppt format) for Unit 4: L'experiència de l'Associació de Varietats Locals, Mallorca
- Video training for Unit 4: Ernest Tasias - Les Refardes, cooperativa catalana de producción de semillas de variedades locales
- Video training for Unit 4: Aina Socies - Associació de Varietats Locals de Mallorca
- Video training for Unit 5: María Carrascosa - Secretaría técnica de la Red de Municipios por la Agroecología
- Video training for Unit 5: Jornada sobre emprendimiento en producción de semillas y mejora vegetal ecológica

4. Materials

The materials developed and collected under Task 5.4 support the implementation of the LiveSeeding Organic Seed and Breeding Entrepreneurship Training Centre and are directly linked to the modules documented in this deliverable. For each training module, a coherent set of learning materials has been prepared to facilitate knowledge transfer, reuse and long-term accessibility.

The materials available for each module include:

- A **training outline** summarising the scope and learning objectives of each module and its units.
- The **presentations** used during the training sessions, structured according to the units and thematic focus of each module.
- **Complementary reference materials** suggested during the sessions or included in the presentations to support and extend the learning process, such as policy documents and technical reports.
- **Audiovisual materials**, including recordings of the online webinars and video content generated during the on-site national training, capturing expert presentations, panel discussions and exchanges with participants.

All presentations and audiovisual materials were shared with participants after each training activity. In addition, participants were invited to complete an evaluation survey, allowing feedback to be collected and used to improve subsequent training actions.

To ensure long-term accessibility and reusability beyond the duration of the project, the training materials are being made available through the **Organic EPrints repository and ECO-PB training database (https://www.eco-pb.org/trainings.html)**. The repository will host the materials corresponding to Modules 23 to 27, including training outlines, presentations and recordings, providing an open access resource for practitioners, trainers and stakeholders interested in organic seed and breeding entrepreneurship. The links to the materials hosted in Organic EPrints are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. List of training materials available in Organic EPrints repository.

	Links to Organic EPrints
Module 23	https://orgprints.org/56624
Module 24	https://orgprints.org/56639
Module 25	https://orgprints.org/56640
Module 26	https://orgprints.org/56641
Module 27	https://orgprints.org/56643

5. Outreach

The work of WP5, task T5.4 and of deliverable D5.3 is based on a series of trainings that took place during the project. Here a list of such trainings:

Date and place	Type action	Module	Title	Links	Participants
13-14 December 2023, online	European Webinar	M24-M27	I EU webinar "Entrepreneurship in the organic seeds and breeding sector"	Call: https://liveseeding.eu/1st-eu-liveseeding-webinar-entrepreneurship-in-the-organic-seeds-and-breeding-sector/ Outcomes (including video): https://liveseeding.eu/eu-liveseeding-webinar-entrepreneurship-in-the-organic-seeds-and-breeding-sector/	130
24-25 February 2025, online	European Webinar	M24 and M25	II EU webinar "Strategies for Marketing and Promoting Organic Seeds Locally and Effectively"	Call: https://liveseeding.eu/join-us-for-the-2nd-eu-liveseeding-webinar-on-strategies-for-marketing-and-promoting-organic-seeds-locally/ Outcomes: https://liveseeding.eu/2nd-eu-webinar-successful-exchange-on-local-strategies-to-promote-organic-seeds/	60
11 March 2025, Carlet (València, Spain)	National Training	M23 and M27	Workshop on entrepreneurship in organic seed production and plant breeding "Generating business proposals for an organic future"	Agenda: https://www.municipiosagroeco.red/agenda-carlet-11-de-marzo-jornada-emprendimiento-produccion-semillas/ Videos: https://www.municipiosagroeco.red/videos-jornada-emprendimiento-produccion-semillas-mejora-vegetal-ecologica-carlet/	45

Annex I. Proposal for national trainings: Entrepreneurship in the organic seeds and breeding sector.

1. Characteristics of the Trainings

Objective: To support entrepreneurship in the organic seed and plant breeding sector. The structure used in EU-level webinars can serve as a reference, and includes the following thematic blocks:

- **Entrepreneurship in the organic seed and breeding sector**
- **Valorisation strategies in local contexts**
- **Governance and financing models**
- **Business model and plan development**

Partners are encouraged to adapt the content and structure according to **specific national needs and conditions**. One recommended option is to organise a **one- or two-day event**, such as:

- **Day 1**: Theoretical focus covering topics 1–3, including presentations of existing initiatives and successful practices.
- **Day 2**: A hands-on session focused on the development of business models and business plans.

Where possible, training activities should **build upon ongoing local and national processes**, maximise relevance and impact.

📌 **As an example**: Training organised by the Spanish *Red de Municipios por la Agroecología* (RMAe) in February 2025
👉 here

Target Groups

The trainings are intended for both existing initiatives seeking to strengthen their strategies and new entrepreneurs interested in entering the organic seed and plant breeding sector.

The **target audience** should include:

- Organic farmers
- Managers of SMEs involved in the production and/or marketing of organic seeds and seedlings
- Stakeholders in organic plant breeding

Conventional farmers and SMEs interested in transitioning to organic systems can also be included.

Target Crops and Varieties

Training activities will support initiatives working with a broad range of crops, with particular emphasis on:

- **Arable crops**
- **Vegetables**

At the **varietal level**, special attention will be given to:

- Organic Heterogeneous Material (OHM)
- Open-pollinated varieties
- Local and traditional varieties
- Outcomes from participatory and organic plant breeding initiatives

Annex II. LiveSeeding National Counselling Plan for Organic Seed and Breeding Entrepreneurship (LS-NCP): Proposal and timeline

1. Goal and scope of the LS-NCP

To develop a practical guide for both new and established entrepreneurs in the organic seed and breeding sector by:

- Mapping the administrative, legal, financial, and training pathways essential for business success
- Identifying existing resources and support mechanisms
- Offering actionable recommendations for stakeholders and public authorities

2. Outcome: the LS-NCP Report

A concise document outlining the key steps—administrative, legal, financial, and training-related—for setting up an SME in the organic seed and/or breeding sector. Refer to Annex V for a proposed structure of the LS-NCP Report.

Sources of information:

- One interview with an SME (see annex II)
- One interview with representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture (or equivalent), specifically from divisions focused on organic (seed) production, seed production and breeding, and support for agrifood SMEs.

Use the introductory letter to present the LS-NCP proposal to interview candidates proposed in Annex I.

3. Final user of the LS-NCP Report

The LS-NCP Report will be shared with initiatives aiming to start entrepreneurial activities in the organic seed and breeding sector, as well as with business incubators to support their work in fostering entrepreneurship. It will serve as an advocacy tool targeting national authorities responsible for relevant areas such as organic production, seed systems, and entrepreneurship.

4. Resources provided for the elaboration of the LS-NCP Report

- Annex I: Introductory letter to present the LS-NCP proposal to interview candidates
- Annex II: List of SMEs to be interviewed per country

- Annex III: Interview outline and guiding questions for SMEs
- Annex IV: Interview outline and guiding questions for National Public Authorities
- Annex V: Proposed structure of the LS-NCP Report

Annex I: Introductory letter to present the LS-NCP proposal to interview candidates

[Organization Name]
Dear [Name of Contact Person],

Subject: Invitation to Participate in the LIVESEEDING National Counselling Plan Development

I am writing to invite [Organization Name] to participate in an important initiative under the European Union-funded LIVESEEDING project, which aims to accelerate the organic seeds and breeding sector across Europe.

About the LIVESEEDING Project
LIVESEEDING brings together 37 partners from 16 European countries to improve the availability of organic seed of suitable cultivars and strengthen the organic seed sector. This work is crucial given the European Union's targets to increase organic farmland to 25% by 2030 and phase out derogations for non-organic seed by 2036.

The National Counselling Plan
As part of this project, we are developing a LiveSeeding National Counselling Plan (LS-NCP) for [Country] to identify and address the specific challenges faced by entrepreneurs in the organic seed and breeding sector. The plan will provide practical guidance on administrative, legal, financial, and training pathways for businesses in this growing sector.

Your Valuable Contribution
We have identified [Organization Name] as a key stakeholder with valuable experience and insights in the organic seed sector. We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to interview you about your experiences, challenges, and recommendations regarding the previously mentioned areas: administrative, legal, financial, and training.

Interview Format
The interview would take approximately [1.5-2] hours and can be conducted [online/in person] at your convenience during [proposed timeframe]. To facilitate the discussion, we will share the interview questions with you in advance.

Benefits of Participation
By participating, your organization will:

- Directly influence recommendations to simplify processes for organic seed businesses
- Gain visibility in a European-level initiative
- Receive early access to the final National Counselling Plan
- Contribute to the growth of the organic seed sector in [Country]

I will follow up with a phone call next week to discuss your potential participation. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at [email] or [phone number] if you have any questions.

Thank you for considering this invitation. Your expertise would make a valuable contribution to improving the entrepreneurial environment for organic seed and breeding in [Country].

Sincerely,
[Your Name] [Your Position] [Partner Organization] LIVESEEDING Project

Annex II: List of SMEs to be interviewed per country

Lead partner	Enterprise/initiative; seed production/cultivar testing	Country	Region typology	Crop type	Organic/ conventional
IPS	UBIOS: Enterprise, seed production (France)/Croatia: ?	France/Croatia?	Western EU	Cereals, legumes	Organic
AEGILOPS	OIKOS Enterprise, seed production and breeding	Greece	Southern EU	Cereals, vegetables	Conventional aiming to start in organic
	Informal group within AEGILOPS that aims to start in organic seed production and breeding	Greece	Southern EU	Cereals, vegetables and legumes	Organic
RMAe	LES REFARDES Initiative, seed production	Spain	Southern EU	Vegetables, flowers and medicinal plants	Organic
RSR	Smarties.bio, seed production	Italy	North EU	Vegetables, cereals, legumes	Organic
PIN	Centrala Nasienna Sp. (Enterprise, seed production)	Poland	Central EU	Cereals, legumes, grasses	Conventional aiming to start in organic
OMKI	Tradisco Seeds LTD (enterprise, seed production)	Hungary	Eastern EU	Cereals and legumes	Conventional aiming to start in organic

Annex III: Interview outline and guiding questions for SMEs

Objective: To gather relevant information for the development of the LS-NCP Report by exploring the experiences, needs, and challenges of SMEs in the organic seed and breeding sector.

Interview Methodology:

- **Format**: 2-hour interview conducted online or in person.
- **Target Profiles:** SMEs currently active in the organic sector or in the process of entering it (see Annex II).
- **Recording:** The interview will be recorded for internal use only, to ensure accurate analysis.
- **Preparation:** Guiding questions may be shared with stakeholders in advance to facilitate a more focused and efficient discussion.

QUESTIONS

Section 1: Company Background

1. Could you briefly describe your company's history, mission, and current scale in the organic seed sector?
2. What motivated your entry into the organic seed and/or breeding market?

Section 2: Registration and Certification Experience

3. What were the key steps you had to complete to operate as an organic seed producer or breeder in the following areas?

    - Register the SME activity
    - Variety register or OHM notification
    - Comply with control and certification rules
    - Comply with health rules
    - Organic certification

For each area listed above, please answer the following questions:

4. Which authorities or institutions did you work with?
5. What was the biggest challenge you encountered?
6. What were the associated costs? Were there any unexpected expenses?
7. Do you have any tips, recommendations, or "lessons learned" for others going through this process?
8. How long did the process take from start to finish?
9. How frequently do you need to renew or update this aspect, and what does that involve?
10. Overall, was the process clear and accessible? What could be improved?
11. Have you received any support (e.g. funding, technical assistance) from public programs to help you meet the requirements?

Section 3: Industry Insights & Legislative Improvements

12. In your opinion, how could national legislation better support organic seed and breeding activities?
13. Are there any steps in the registration or certification processes that could be simplified or improved? Please comment on the following:

    - Register the SME activity
    - Variety register or OHM notification
    - Comply with control and certification rules
    - Comply with health rules
    - Organic certification

14. Do you face any regulatory barriers that are specific to the organic seed industry?
15. What role should public authorities play in supporting the growth of the organic seed sector? What concrete actions would you propose?
16. What recommendations would you make to policymakers to make the organic seed sector more accessible and attractive for new entrepreneurs?

Section 4: Funding

17. In which of the following areas have you most needed funding?

    - Labour
    - Cleaning/packaging facilities
    - Seed processing infrastructure

- Organic certification
- Variety registration process
- Marketing strategies cost
- Education and training
- Support with the setup of seed producers' or breeders' organisations
- Organic breeding and seed production research projects
- Other

18. How have you addressed your financial needs when starting the SME? Have you applied to specific funding programmes or calls? Were some types of support missing?
19. Have existing programmes presented any specific challenges? What advice would you give to others applying, and what improvements would you suggest for the programme managers?
20. What kinds of incentives (e.g. tax relief, grants, research funding) would help attract more investment or new entrants to the organic seed sector?

Section 5: Training Needs and Experiences

21. What formal education or training do you have related to your current work?
22. What training methods or programmes have you used to enhance your skills? What challenges have you faced, and how did you overcome them?
23. In which topics have you felt the strongest need for training? Were you able to find relevant courses or resources?
24. What types of training actions (e.g. informal/formal, long-/short-term) do you think should be developed, and in which areas? Please consider the following topics:

- Entrepreneurship, business plans and models
- Marketing
- Organization models and governance
- Financing and investment management
- Policy and regulation
- Organic seed production and breeding techniques
- Other

Annex IV: Interview outline and guiding questions for National Public Authorities

Objective: To gather key information from public institutions for the LS-NCP Report, focusing on the administrative, legal, financial, and training frameworks affecting organic seed and breeding SMEs.

Interview Methodology:

- **Format**: 1.5-hour online interview.
- **Target Profiles**: Public officials responsible for one or more of the following areas, within the Ministry of Agriculture or equivalent institutions:
    - Organic (seed) production
    - Seed production and breeding
    - Support for agrifood SMEs
- **Flexibility**: The interview may be conducted with all relevant representatives in a joint meeting, or separately in up to three individual sessions, depending on the national context and partner assessment.
- **Preparation**: The interview questions may be shared with participants in advance to ensure a focused and efficient discussion.
- **Recording**: Interviews may be recorded for internal use only, to ensure accurate analysis and reporting.
- **Coordination**: Partners are encouraged to coordinate with WP4 to align efforts and optimize interactions with ministry officials.

QUESTIONS

Section 1: Organic Seed and Breeding Sector

1. What are the main characteristics of the national organic seed and breeding sector?
2. In your view, what are the main drivers that attract new initiatives or entrepreneurs to this sector?

Section 2: Entrepreneurial Main Steps

3. What are the main administrative and legal steps to initiate the activity in the organic seeds and breeding sector in the following areas?

    - Register the SME activity
    - Variety registers or OHM notification
    - Comply with control and certification rules
    - Comply with health rules

- Organic certification

4. Which public authorities or institutions are responsible for each step? Do they operate at different administrative levels (e.g. municipal, regional, national)?
5. From your perspective, what are the main challenges that entrepreneurs face during these registration and certification processes? Are there particularly complex requirements or bottlenecks?
6. What are the typical costs associated with each of these steps?
7. how long does each step of the process take, from initiation to completion?
8. Would you consider the overall process to be clear and accessible? Are there specific steps that could be simplified or improved? Do you have any recommendations or tips for new entrepreneurs navigating this process?

Section 3: Favourable Regulatory Framework

9. In your view, which administrative barriers have been or could be eased to better support the creation of new businesses in the following areas?

    - SME registration
    - Variety registration or OHM notification
    - Compliance with control and certification rules
    - Compliance with plant health regulations
    - Organic certification

10. Are there any regulatory obstacles you consider specific to the organic seed and breeding sector? (e.g. legal gaps, misalignment with organic principles, excessive requirements compared to conventional systems)
11. Are the regulations affecting this sector periodically reviewed or updated? How do you think current policies and regulations could be adapted to better support the evolving entrepreneurial ecosystem and economic shifts?

Section 4: Access to Financing

12. What financial support schemes—existing or planned—are available to help entrepreneurs in the early stages of setting up a business? (e.g. grants, direct subsidies, social venture capital, microcredit programmes)
13. Are there tax incentives currently in place—or that could be introduced—for new entrepreneurs? (e.g. tax exemptions in the first years of operation, reduced registration or certification fees)

14. Are there any public-private investment funds currently available to support start-ups in the organic seed and breeding sector? If not, do you see potential or interest in establishing such mechanisms?
15. Which of the following areas are covered by existing financial support programmes? (Please specify which programmes support each area, where applicable)

    - Labour
    - Cleaning and packaging facilities
    - Seed processing infrastructure
    - Organic certification
    - Variety registration process
    - Marketing and communication strategies
    - Education and training
    - Support for establishing seed producers' or breeders' organisations
    - Research and innovation in organic breeding and seed production
    - Other (please specify)

16. Are there any government-funded scale-up or scale-out programmes to help SMEs grow beyond the start-up phase? What types of actions could be developed to support business expansion (e.g. financial assistance, mentorship, logistical support)?

Section 5: Training and Skills Development Programs

17. Are there existing training programmes—formal or informal—focused on entrepreneurship in the following areas?

    - Business development, planning, and models
    - Marketing and communication
    - Organisational models and governance
    - Financial and investment management
    - Policy and regulatory frameworks
    - Organic seed production and plant breeding techniques
    - Other (please specify)

18. Do you see potential for integrating organic seed and breeding entrepreneurship into existing school curricula, vocational training programmes, or university courses?

19. Does the Ministry currently offer training for public officials working on entrepreneurship in the organic seed and breeding sector? What specific measures could help ensure these officials are well equipped to manage support programmes and address the specific needs of entrepreneurs in the organic seed and breeding sector?

Section 6: Infrastructure for Comprehensive Entrepreneurship Support

20. Is there a national or regional strategy specifically aimed at promoting entrepreneurship in the organic seed and breeding sector? (e.g. national entrepreneurship support centres, targeted programmes or agencies)
21. In your opinion, what should be the core components of a strategy tailored to organic seed and breeding entrepreneurship? (e.g. mentoring, technical assistance, access to infrastructure, legal and financial guidance, market facilitation)
22. Is there effective inter-ministerial coordination (e.g. among Agriculture, Economy, Education, Labour, Science & Innovation Ministries), as well as collaboration with regional and local governments, to ensure an integrated support strategy? What actions could be developed or strengthened to improve coordination across these levels?
23. Have partnerships been established with private sector actors, universities, chambers of commerce and agriculture, or NGOs to build synergies for entrepreneurship development? What new types of public-private partnerships could be explored to strengthen the ecosystem for organic seed and breeding entrepreneurs?

Annex V: Proposed structure of the LS-NCP Report

Interviewed stakeholders are expected to provide substantial insights for **Section 1**, allowing for a more in-depth analysis. In contrast, **Sections 2 and 3** may offer more limited data due to fewer available resources and existing support structures. **Section 4** is conceived as a forward-looking space to gather strategic proposals for the future, based on interview outcomes and recommendations emerging from previous sections.

INTRODUCTION

- Overview of national organic production and seed demand
- General landscape of the organic seed and breeding sector (supply side)
- Motivations for entrepreneurship in the sector and identification of current market gaps

SECTION 1: Administrative and Legal Aspects

Objective: Provide a detailed analysis of the procedural and regulatory steps involved in establishing an SME in the organic seed and breeding sector.

For each of the areas listed below, describe:

- Key steps involved
- Competent authorities or institutions
- Specific needs and challenges
- Practical tips and recommendations for entrepreneurs
- Available support resources
- Proposals for improvement (particularly for policymakers and public administrators)

Key Areas:

- General SME registration
- Variety registration and OHM notification
- Compliance with certification and control rules
- Compliance with plant health regulations
- Organic certification

Conclusions and general recommendations for improving the administrative and legal framework.

SECTION 2: Access to Funding and Financial Support

Objective: Map the main public and private funding mechanisms and assess their relevance and accessibility for entrepreneurs in the sector.

For each funding area:

- Describe existing programmes and schemes
- Identify sector-specific needs and gaps as highlighted in the interviews
- Outline key challenges
- Share practical advice for applicants
- Provide suggestions for improvement

Funding Areas:

- Labour
- Seed processing infrastructure (including cleaning and packaging facilities)
- Organic certification
- Variety registration or OHM notification
- Marketing and communication
- Education and training
- Support for the creation of seed producers' or breeders' organisations/networks
- Research and innovation in organic breeding and seed production
- Other relevant areas

Conclusions and general recommendations for improving access to finance and funding opportunities.

SECTION 3: Training and Skills Development

Objective: Review available training programmes, identify gaps, and provide targeted recommendations to strengthen entrepreneurial capacity in the sector.

For each training area:

- List relevant public and private initiatives
- Summarise the needs and challenges expressed by stakeholders
- Share good practices and tips
- Propose concrete improvements for programme designers and public authorities

Training Areas:

- Entrepreneurship, business planning and models
- Marketing and communication
- Organisational models and governance
- Financial and investment management
- Policy and regulatory literacy
- Agronomic techniques for organic seed production and plant breeding
- Other specialised areas

Conclusions and general recommendations to improve training and capacity-building strategies for entrepreneurs.

SECTION 4: Building the Future – Strategic Recommendations to Boost National Entrepreneurship

Objective: Provide a forward-looking roadmap with concrete, actionable steps to strengthen the national ecosystem for organic seed and breeding entrepreneurship.

This section should consolidate:

- Strategic proposals from interviewees
- Cross-cutting recommendations from Sections 1–3
- A clear **step-by-step guide** outlining actions, responsible actors, and expected outcomes