



Cultivating Diversity and Food Quality

DIVERSIFOOD final congress

12 December 2018 Rennes, France - Day 3

Concept note for Workshop 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Workshop on financing participatory and multi-actor research

Objective of the workshop

With a diversified panel of participants, we wish to open up avenues to provide means to broadly implement DIVERSIFOOD concepts outside the frame of projects. We aim to spread in Europe multi-actor and transdisciplinary research approach to boost organic agriculture based on diversity.

DIVERSIFOOD has demonstrated how to boost organic agriculture based on diversity through multi-actor and transdisciplinary research approach. This workshop will explore, with a diversified panel of participants, how to secure a broader implementation of DIVERSIFOOD concept and approach outside the project framework, and will highlight concrete proposals to experiment in European networks.

Questions addressed during the workshop

- What **organisational models to sustain pioneering and multi-actor processes**, embedded in territories and communities, and aiming at the development of diversity-based food systems can be sustainable in the long run?
- Which avenues can be envisaged to effectively **support and finance these local and collective initiatives**?

Expected participants

- Actors involved in the revival and valorisation of cultivated diversity and development of organic farming: how to build innovative and autonomous local and collective organisations?
- Usual funding bodies for our multi-actor researches: how can they foster a transition from a project-based financing to a longer term support of collective initiatives and organisations,
- Partners of other key multi-actor projects (LIVESEED, CERERE, DYNAVERSITY, and others): based on experiences sharing, what common efforts can we highlight, and which cross initiatives can we build?

Context

DIVERSIFOOD activities have engaged networks of farmers in eleven Countries in Europe. Partners have explored genetic resources of about 15 species. However, more than one million accessions have been stored in European Genebanks from the 1980s. Our project has been a proof of concept of how these resources can be brought back to life to enhance food diversity and resilience of agroecosystems.

The diversification of the agricultural sector is just beginning. Projects like DIVERSIFOOD have spread awareness about the role of plant diversity. Farmers have shown that it is possible to successfully implement plant breeding and seed production on farm. Participatory and multi-actor research is

offering a support to connect and amplify these activities, whilst creating transdisciplinary knowledge to the benefit of society as a whole.

It is time to start a transition from proofs-of-concept and success stories towards a more systematic deployment of such collective, multi-actor and multi-knowledge approach to food systems diversity. Scale up from anecdotal achievements to a consistent change requires longer term, cross-cutting efforts, for example: scientists require adequate transdisciplinary training to deal with the complexity of real societies; farmers need assistance and support to successfully undertake breeding activities; decentralised innovation needs an adequate, democratic and effective coordination. Neither the project-based funding framework, nor the “market” can fulfil on their own these needs. Alternative organisational and funding models need to be sought to produce effective impacts at a significantly larger scale.

Propositions for the organisation of the workshop

Participants will be invited to share their experiences and suggestions to improve drafted paths emerging from DIVERSIFOOD activities and presented at the beginning of the workshop, on mainly two issues (three if we have time): (1) organisational models, (2) societal and financial support to local and collective organisations in building their long-term sustainability and self-sufficiency, and (3) fulfilling the training needs of the actors involved (researchers, farmers and facilitators) into this new paradigm.

We should end the workshop with concrete propositions to experiment in European networks.