Why a valorisation strategy?

The enhancement of agrobiodiversity builds on the social acknowledgment of its multiple values (environmental, ethical and cultural values), in all their manifestations, from the agro-ecological systems to the diet patterns. In this regard, the appreciation of the ‘biodiverse food products’ in the consumption practices is crucial.

The DIVERSIFOOD project has considered the promotion and valorisation of these products in the market as an integral part of a broader, collective action aimed at strengthening and promoting the whole production-consumption systems based on more diverse genetic resources, thus guaranteeing their sustainable use.

The definition and implementation of a valorisation strategy is therefore considered as a multi-actor process, based on the interaction among the various actors involved in breeding, farming, processing and consumption of the final products. Moreover, connection with similar pathways may offer further opportunities to broader actions of agrobiodiversity valorisation.

A multi-actor and multi-dimensional process

DIVERSIFOOD has described the valorisation strategy as composed of five action areas closely interdependent:

- **mobilisation of genetic resources**: actions aimed at knowing and managing the varieties relevant for local farming systems;
- **definition of specific quality**: actions to identify and codify the attributes of biodiverse products based on the selected varieties and methods of cultivation and processing;
- **marketing and communication**: choices and tools to manage biodiverse products in the market and convey values embodied in products and productions systems;
- **integration with other projects**: inter-connections with other projects/strategies, at local and broader scale;
- **effectiveness and sustainability**: capacity of the initiatives to contribute to agrobiodiversity enhancement, and to last over time.
The valorisation strategy is also seen as a multi-dimensional process. Understanding the functioning of each stage of the valorisation process and the ways it can effectively work implies to take into consideration several aspects:

- **technicalities and knowledge** around the implementation of activities and processes that are completely or to a certain extent new;
- **organisational issues** associated with the -interaction among the various actors involved;
- **institutional elements** mobilised to manage the various activities;
- **political and legislative aspects** that affect activities and processes;
- **social and cultural aspects** involved in the several processes that take place in the valorisation strategy;
- **economic conditions** where the new activities and processes can work.

**Studied initiatives**

DIVERSIFOOD has developed **five case studies**, chosen as examples of valorisation strategies in France, UK and Italy. They are all marketing initiatives for bread produced using landraces/old wheat varieties/newly breed wheat varieties through participatory breeding:

- **ITALY**: three regional initiatives, involving networks of farmers and processors, in cooperation with Rete Semi Rurali, engaged around cultivation of old wheat varieties, landraces and populations, and traditional bread making. Participatory breeding, production of bread with healthy properties, short chains and territorial embeddedness characterise these initiatives.

- **FRANCE**: a national programme, financed by public funds, involving a wide network including farmers gathered into local farmers’ association belonging to Réseau Semences Paysannes. The aim is developing new population-varieties adapted to organic agriculture, free of intellectual property, farmer-managed, suitable for producing healthy flour and bread.

- **UK**: promotion on the market of products derived from a hugely diverse wheat population that is the result of an evolutionary breeding programme started 15 years ago to produce a population suited for organic and low-input farming systems. Despite the long breeding process, the initiative is at an early stage, thus the number of actors involved is still small and the market channels are relatively undeveloped.

**Suggested readings**
