

EU CAP Network Focus Group Local perennial plant genetic resources in view of climate change and biodiversity loss

Flash report

21 May 2025

Innovation and Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI



Funded by
the European Union

This **Focus Group (FG)** consists of a temporary team of **20 selected experts** including **farmers, advisors and researchers** from **14 countries**. The FG met twice in person in Madrid (November 2024) and Chania (May 2025). The FG was tasked to discuss the main question: How can the conservation and use of local under-utilised varieties of perennial crops be attractive and profitable for farmers and thereby contribute to biodiversity-friendly sustainable farming under climate change?

Field visits

The experts visited three sites in Crete, Greece: the experimental facilities of the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (MAICH), the national collection of olive varieties (ELGO's IOSV institute) and Operational Group 'Exploitation of Cretan chestnut genetic resources for the introduction of high-added-value products to the market'. The group engaged in an interesting discussion with local chestnuts producers.

Main outcomes

- Good, innovative farming approaches and methodologies are essential. The main highlighted practices involve several approaches that can deliver farming benefits, such as agroecological, breeding and propagation-related practices.
- Valorisation is a process that requires multi-faceted approaches, including sustainable farming, economic incentives and consumer awareness.
- Training, demonstration farms, use of novel tools (ICT and AI) are main aspects for building appropriated and effective capacity building framework for practitioners.

Mini Papers in progress

To go further in the topic, the experts of the Focus Group have developed and discussed six Mini Papers, focusing on 1) How to conserve local perennial germplasm 'on farm' and 'in situ'; 2) Benefits and services of local and under-utilised perennial crops; 3) Boosting traditional genetic resource use and sharing in agriculture: practical steps for farmers and stakeholders; 4) Developing participatory plant breeding for perennial crops; 5) Unique varieties – unique opportunities, local perennial species valorisation; 6) Conservation and valorisation of potential perennial arable crops - case studies from five European countries.

Key messages and takeaways

Diversification and collaborative approaches are essential for designing strategies of conserving the use of local perennial crops. Local-scale initiatives could be fundamental for valorisation and coordination activities. More research is needed on sustainable farm practices, enhancement of tools and innovative approaches for knowledge transfer. Germplasm identification, characterisation and propagation are also key steps for conservation and sustainable use. Future Operational Groups could address innovation in supporting farmers in direct sales and marketing, exchanging knowledge, and cultivating specific varieties for resilience to climate change.



[Find out more on the event webpage](#)