

LINKAGES Activity final workshop

4 - 5 June 2018, Florence, Italy

Future plans and concrete steps

- ❖ Create future moments for more exchange/interaction between *ex situ* /on-farm communities around concrete issues such as:
 - Improving the varied scenario of MTA/SMTAs currently used by on-farm communities for material exchange, ensuring the possibility of interactions with genebank collections and modalities;
 - Possibility of integration/communication (with careful consideration of privacy issues) between the databases used by on-farm networks and communities and those used by *ex situ* genebanks;
 - Pilot projects on multiplication/dissemination of *ex situ* germplasm of interest to on-farm communities and/or small-scale organic farmers.

Opportunities for these continued exchanges and interactions could be offered by ongoing EU-funded projects focusing on synergies between *ex situ/in situ*/on-farm conservation approaches and communities, namely the DYNAVERSITY and FARMERS' PRIDE projects in which some LINKAGES partners are involved. Rete Semi Rurali (RSR) is part of the Dynaversity project and will take care of embedding the issues emerging from LINKAGES into this project, finding opportunities to research them further. Other opportunities can be offered by seed networks' farmer field days and visits to experimental fields, which could allow *ex situ* personnel to get better acquainted with the possibilities offered by seed/farmer networks in terms of germplasm evaluation/characterization. Dedicated meetings of the ECPGR Working Groups can also offer opportunities for deepening some of the aspects emerging from LINKAGES. Working Group members/Chairs are called to make these spaces available when they see the opportunity.

- ❖ Set up a new international journal for publications focused on participatory, "informal", decentralized research on organic agriculture, seeds and agrobiodiversity. The International Treaty had proposed something similar some time ago and the ECPGR is planning something along these lines within the framework of a recently approved EU research project. It would be good to have someone from the European seed networks represented in the editorial board together with experts from genebanks, so as to work together on evaluating research results, which come from both worlds.

- ❖ Develop a pilot project proposal involving selected national genebanks and on-farm networks to test the evaluation/characterization of priority germplasm sets of interest for organic, small scale agriculture in farmers' fields and sharing of the resulting data (with intellectual property considerations) with mutual benefit for farmers and genebanks. This could be a first step towards establishing an "alternative" evaluation network capable of incorporating the need for formal scientific reliability and the participatory advantages of working directly in a more informal, on-farm context, establishing new integrated research protocols. An opportunity to be explored for this possible proposal is the Horizon 2020 call "SFS-28-2019-Genetic resources and pre-breeding communities", with the topic "adding value to plant GenRes" in 2019; another opportunity could be the next round of ECPGR Activity Grant Scheme, which is expected for 2019.

- ❖ Develop the bases for an *ex situ*/on farm "alliance" (definition, structure and mandate to be defined), which could stem from the above interactions and joint activities, and become a steward of a more integrated vision of agrobiodiversity conservation and contribute to stronger implementation of the International Treaty's Articles 6 and 9 on sustainable use and farmers' rights in Europe.