

**Sustainable preservation of indigenous South East European legumes
and their traditional food and feed products**

SEE-ERA-PLUS-168/9(Albania)

Sokrat JANI

Agricultural Technology Transfer Center, Lushnje, Albania

Second workshop

Thessaloniki, September 23-26, 2012

Introduction

Albania is well-known for:

- **diverse environment (a wide range of climates, soils and altitude zones);**
- **high variability in cultivated plants.**

- **There are a lot of primitive cultivars and indigenous landraces, and wild species as well, especially of legume plants.**

- **They are cultivated especially in farmers' orchards, even in the most remote rural villages.**

Main causes of agro biodiversity loss in Albania

- 1. Agricultural sector was developed during the communist period, in two forms: state farms and collective farms.**

This specialization had a negative impact on indigenous crop varieties.

 - introduced varieties predominated in these farms.**
 - endemic, rare and threatened varieties were restricted mainly to family plots.**
- 2. Loss became more intensive after the collapse, in the '90s.**

People started to leave their native land in rural zones and settled in urban zones. It was consequently associated with the loss of possibility to cultivate landraces of legume plants in the future.

SEE-ERA-168/9(Albania)

Methodology

Thanks to SEE-ERA.NET Plus Joint Call Project, collecting missions of legume plant in the Central Albania were organized.

- designation of the working plan;
- Consulting and gathering the information about the villages with the best variation of legume plants;
- exploration and collection through missions in the field (*seed samples were only collected when farmers declared their materials have been cultivated for ages in their families*);
- recording the local information about:
 - species growing,
 - traditional knowledge about production practices and utilization of landraces;
- characterization and evaluation of collected landraces;
- preservation of landraces seeds.



Map of Berat County (Central Albanian zone) above and municipalities of Skrapar and Berat districts (below) where the landraces were collected.

SEE-ERA-168/9(Albania)



**Collecting mission gathering and recording
the local information by the interview of
farmers
(Potom - Skrapar)**



**Collecting mission
with Old household members
(Gjerbës - Skrapar)**

SEE-ERA-168/9(Albania)



**Exploration visit in a family plot
(Potom - Skrapar)**



**Exploration of a traditional
common bean population
(Hajdaraj - Lushnje)**

SEE-ERA-168/9(Albania)



**Evaluation and characterization plot
of common bean populations
(ATTC-Lushnja)**



**Preparing of bean populations for
preservation
(ATTC-Lushnja)**

Project outcomes

The project has achieved some considerable successes.

- **27 samples of common bean altogether were collected;**
 - 16 populations of climbing plant type,
 - 11 populations of bush plant type
- **2 samples of vetchlings (*Lathyrus* spp.),**
- **one sample of chickpea (*Cicer arietinum*).**

- **All landrace seeds are characterized and evaluated according to minimum descriptor list.**
- **All landrace seeds are preserved in the ATTC gene bank.**
- **The project collected and documented traditional knowledge on the uses of indigenous crops.**

Conclusions

- The project did not imply the protection of the entire spectrum of plants important to agriculture that are threatened by extinction .
- Otherwise, the project approach was the development of a replicable model of agricultural biodiversity protection for a group of the selected local varieties (legumes) in one region of Albania, which could be used as a strategy in other regions or for other crops and varieties.
- Two years of project implementation have shown that the sustainable use of agro-biodiversity requires community-driven in situ and on-farm initiatives supported through knowledge dissemination, marketing efforts, publicity, and cooperation with research and governmental structures.
- The approaches and instruments developed by the project will be tested in other regions of Albania.

SEE-ERA-168/9(Albania)

*Thank you
for
your attention*

