



GRANOLLERS MANIFESTO

FOSTERING CULTIVATED BIODIVERSITY IN EUROPEAN MUNICIPALITIES

We, the organisers and participants of the 1st **European Symposium “Fostering Cultivated Biodiversity through Local Food Policies”**, held in Granollers, Spain, on 29–30 April 2025, have jointly prepared this document to issue a call to action to European municipalities and higher levels of governance. In light of the growing unpredictability threatening European food security, in this Manifesto we propose cultivated biodiversity as a key lever for building sustainable and healthy local food systems across Europe.



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CULTIVATED BIODIVERSITY: WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT MATTERS

Agrobiodiversity refers to the diversity in domesticated crops, farm animals and forest trees intentionally cultivated and reared by humans for food and agriculture. For this reason, it is distinct from wild biodiversity. For plant crops, we speak of **Cultivated Biodiversity** which includes the seeds of a vast diversity of landraces, heirloom varieties, and locally adapted cultivars.

Cultivated biodiversity is the first building block of our food chain and plays a critical role in food sovereignty and system resilience. In other words, **seeds are life** and their variety and diversity are the best insurance policy to face changing environmental, economic and geopolitical conditions as well as challenging times characterised by uncertainty and disruption.

To optimize food production, farmers have, over thousands of years, selected and adapted plants that produced the best results on their farms, according to local climate, altitude, soil and other conditions, as **one size doesn't fit all**. Farmers and breeders also foster new cultivated biodiversity, through the development of adapted varieties, new farmer' selection and new populations, that evolve with the needs and requirements of organic and agroecology-oriented agriculture. They do so in harmony with

nature, connecting communities to their land and cultural identity and with methods in line with the precautionary principle, a foundation of sustainable human action on the environment.

Seeds are also a strategic asset as food cannot be cultivated without them. Ensuring that farmers, seed savers, breeders and citizens in Europe can **manage seeds collectively, as commons, makes us stronger**, especially in times of uncertainty. Therefore, we must safeguard the livelihoods of these guardians of cultivated biodiversity.

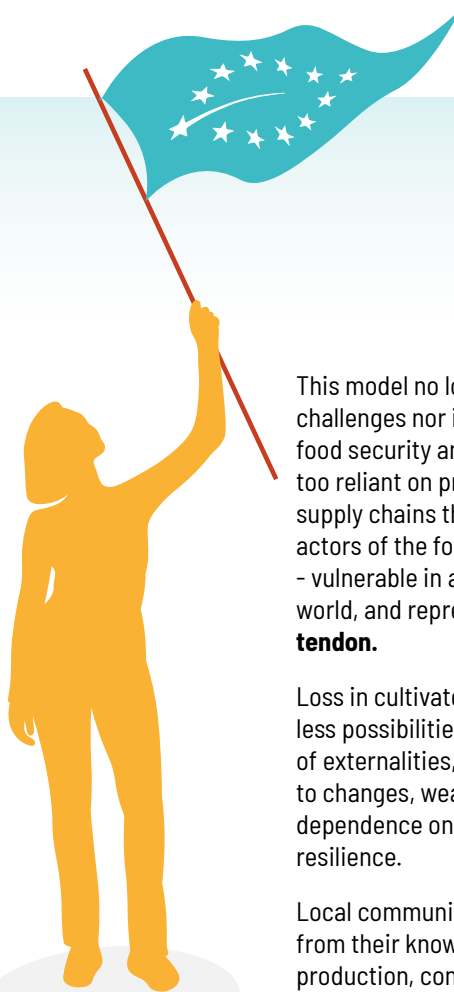
Richness in cultivated biodiversity and local knowledge are also the backbone of our culinary traditions, variety of local dishes and cultural practices. All of this enables us to bring healthy, tasty and varied food to our tables, **because food is not just food as seeds are not just a commodity**.

These elements are fundamental in the realisation of human right to food.

THE CHALLENGES OF TODAY'S EUROPEAN FOOD SYSTEMS

The current agri-food system in Europe is based on intensive monocrop, high-input agriculture, reliant on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, that emerged as a practical solution to achieve food security in war-torn Europe. As industrial agriculture and food systems standardized, globalised and concentrated exponentially, agricultural biodiversity has sharply declined. Currently, only 4 % of the 250,000 to 300,000 known edible plant species -150 to 200- are used by humans, and just three -rice, maize and wheat- provide nearly 60 % of the calories and proteins humans get from plants.

The related cheap food paradigm, with over-processed foods, highly-concentrated supply chains and seed markets, lead to unhealthy diets and encourage economic patterns with harmful consequences for both society and the environment (for instance, all stages of the agri-food chain are collectively responsible for between 21% and 37% of total global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions). This results in an illusion of abundance with a high price tag.



This model no longer addresses current challenges nor it serves the purposes of food security and sovereignty. We are too reliant on production systems and supply chains that make us - farmers, actors of the food system and citizens - vulnerable in an increasingly unstable world, and represent **Europe's Achilles tendon**.

Loss in cultivated biodiversity means less possibilities to adapt in the face of externalities, greater vulnerability to changes, weather extremes, more dependence on imports, hence less resilience.

Local communities have been detached from their knowledge and means of production, control over supply chains and consumption patterns, hindering their social, cultural and economic fabric.



MUNICIPALITIES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES AS DRIVERS OF CHANGE IN CITY REGION AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS IN EUROPE: BOTTOM-UP APPROACH

In spite of the challenging situation, many local communities and territories around Europe have organised themselves and developed successful territorial initiatives that put sustainable management of public goods at the centre of their action. They are demonstrating a strong capacity to innovate and are leading the way towards resilient, healthy and fair local food systems with strong potential to address current and future needs.

These initiatives engage public administrations, farmers, farmers' organizations, food processors, retailers, researchers, consumers and organised civil society at local, regional and national level,

which are becoming more and more interconnected, at the European and global level, through mutual support and shared learning.

These initiatives are strategic levers that can lead to a systemic transformation. The aspiration of active municipalities is that these positive experiences and best practice cases can become mainstream of a new and territorialised food systems model in Europe based on cultivated biodiversity, quality, healthy and tasty food.

VISION AND PATHWAY TO EUROPEAN SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

What is our vision?

By 2050 all European municipalities will have a food policy that prioritises city region based agri-food systems that delivers healthy and tasty food relying on cultivated biodiversity and locally adapted seeds using natural resources within the planetary boundaries while ensuring economically viable livelihoods to its communities and people. These policies will be a key pillar of a fair, resilient and sustainable European agri-food system of the future, making supply chains and consumption patterns work for people's well-being.

These policies will be supported and fostered by a multilevel legislative, policy and funding framework and based on human right to food-based approach.

What systems can support the realisation of this vision?

This vision can be supported by **mainstreaming organic agriculture and agroecology-oriented production** as the most evidence-based pathways to build sustainable and healthy food systems, to mitigate and adapt to global emergencies, and to secure food and seed sovereignty. [Organic farming currently accounts for over 10% of the utilised agricultural area in the European Union, involving more than 419,000 producers across Member States.](#)

Agroecology offers a broad and integrated process-oriented approach, as it interweaves environmental and ecological concerns with social, cultural, political and economic dimensions.



For this reason, agroecology provides an appropriate framework and a path for systemic transformation.

What is the role of cultivated biodiversity within these systems?

Cultivated biodiversity will be at the heart of these systems, with farmers, seed-savers, breeders and local actors dynamically managing resilient cultivars adapted to specific conditions and supported as public goods. Municipalities will leverage their proximity to citizens and their innovative capacity to integrate cultivated biodiversity across food production, distribution, consumption, and urban planning.

The sustainable use of cultivated biodiversity¹ encompasses the following elements:

- the conservation and sustainable use of landraces and heirloom varieties;
- the selection and cultivation of new or already existing farmers' varieties and populations;
- the breeding and commercialization of resilient cultivars as a result of organic plant breeding, an approach that creates agrobiodiversity that evolves with the needs and requirements of today's organic and agroecology-oriented agriculture;
- special attention is given to seeds resulting from participatory programmes (with direct involvement of farmers and value chain actors) and contributing to open-source seed systems.

1. Several terms are currently used in reference to cultivars for food and agriculture (such as plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, agricultural biodiversity, etc.), each with slight (or significant) differences. We support the use of the term "cultivated biodiversity" as it directly relates to what is grown, processed, and consumed. This includes landraces and heirloom varieties, farmers varieties and populations, outcomes of participatory breeding, composite cross populations (CCP), and dynamic populations, robust pure lines and open pollinated varieties coming from Organic Plant Breeding, which are specially designed for organic and agroecology-oriented production systems (including Organic Heterogeneous Material-OHM and Organic Varieties as of EU Organic Regulation). Within this framework, we propose special attention to those cultivars that fall under open-source seed systems and have no physiological restrictions on their reproduction.



THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THIS VISION MUST UNFOLD

Whereas

- an estimated [75% of the EU citizens live in urban areas](#) and this share is expected to reach more than 80% by 2050;
- agri-food systems, as currently conceived, cannot meet the food demand of cities and towns in a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable way;
- a strong base of experiences and positive examples of local food policies exists throughout Europe, but lacks a comprehensive multilevel strategy and coordinated systematic approach;
- cultivated biodiversity is still marginalised in municipal food policies agendas, in spite of its crucial role in food systems transformation;

in a context where

- the EU recognizes the importance of organic farming for sustainable food systems, set out a comprehensive organic action plan and provides financial support to within the CAP; member states can define implementing measures to orient the use of CAP funds to explicitly support cultivated biodiversity;
- the EU Cohesion Policy, the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund can support sustainable municipal development initiatives, including city-region food policies, to address economic, environmental, climate, demographic and social challenges.

The transition to more sustainable agri-food systems cannot happen without municipalities.

- Municipalities can harness their spending power and proximity to citizens to significantly contribute to the transformation of food systems from the ground up;
- local food policies must integrate the territorial and cultural dimension as a fundamental component of the agri-food system, reconnecting and linking urban, peri-urban, and rural opportunities and needs through the city region approach.

Therefore, there is the opportunity and the need to:

- support the existing initiatives of municipalities in the local food policies through an enabling European, national and regional legal framework and adequate funding streams, including a link between urban and rural areas within a city region framework;
- scale out such initiatives throughout Europe and ensure that agroecological transition of agri-food systems is the core element of municipal food policies;
- ensure cultivated biodiversity is an integral part of such food policies.



CALL TO ACTION FOR EUROPEAN MUNICIPALITIES

Municipal key strategies within the MUFPP Framework for action

In 2015, more than 100 cities signed up to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), a declaration and a concrete working tool for cities to integrate food systems in urban planning.

Since then, cities around the world have increasingly become laboratories for the development of integrated food policies addressing different dimensions of food systems, working on six categories identified in the MUFPP.

The 32 concrete strategic actions listed in the Annex to the Granollers Manifesto aim to integrate cultivated biodiversity in the six MUFPP categories with the following goals:



1. GOVERNANCE: these actions seek to strengthen local organizations active in community and dynamic cultivated biodiversity management, generate alliances and multi-stakeholder participation, as well as foster inter- and intra-municipal and multi-level collaboration for genuine participatory governance.

E.g. Food Councils, local actors map, new public departments and working groups, common projects with farmers, policy monitoring frameworks.



2. SUSTAINABLE DIETS AND NUTRITION: these actions aim to raise awareness and mobilise different target groups in the municipality on the importance of organic, biodiverse and geographically and culturally appropriate, plant-rich diet.

E.g. awareness campaigns for the school community, training activities for mass catering, research and dissemination of nutritional characteristics of cultivated biodiversity.



3. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY: municipalities seek to promote the incorporation of cultivated biodiversity in local food projects within the social and solidarity economy, and actions linked to the realisation of the right to food for all.

E.g. food banks, food labs, community kitchens, training activities in culturally significant gastronomy.



4. FOOD PRODUCTION: these actions aim to strengthen formal and informal seed systems to boost local and decentralized organic seed production and breeding.

E.g. urban agriculture programs; community seed banks, seed libraries and farmers' networks; recovery and testing of local and traditional varieties; support to organic plant breeding; organic seeds and seedling distribution.



5. FOOD SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION: these actions aim to embed cultivated biodiversity throughout the entire local food chain, supporting entrepreneurship and creating frameworks that give visibility to products resulting from respectful productive and processing methods.

E.g. sustainable public food procurement, local incubators, local short value chains, labels for biodiversity, artisanal and mild food processing.



6. FOOD WASTE: actions in this category aim to support circular economy approaches within production, processing, and retail initiatives that prioritise the use of local and traditional varieties and populations, derived from organic, participatory or open-source breeding systems, as a means to foster their horizontal proliferation.

E.g. gleaning projects, local composting sites, integrating surplus produce in local chains.



Strengthening the Municipal Roadmap through multilevel actions

To support the roadmap defined by municipalities in the MUFPP and the Granollers Manifesto, several legislative, policy, and financial actions are needed at different levels to create long-term enabling conditions across the different dimensions of the food system.

At the European Union level, decision-makers should:

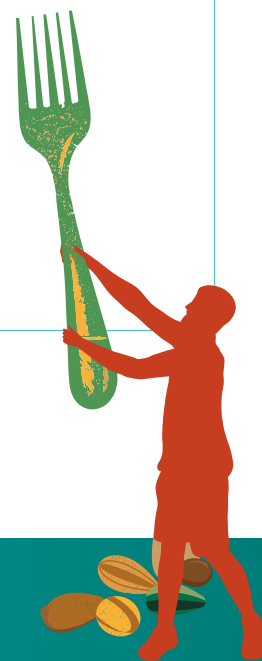
1. Make “sustainable public food procurement” an integral part of the upcoming revision of the Public Procurement Directive, with mandatory minimum criteria for organic and fair food, and extra marks awarded for agroecological practices, such as the use of cultivated biodiversity, beyond the minimum organic requirement criteria.
2. Strengthen support to food policies and cultivated biodiversity in European Regional Development and Social Cohesion funds for municipalities.
3. Increase support for organic farming in CAP, in the social conditionality framework, ensuring that the budget set for organic agriculture and cultivated biodiversity is safeguarded in CAP Strategic Plans at national level.
4. Ensure that the future EU regulation on production & marketing of Plant Reproductive Material (PRM) effectively facilitates the integration of cultivated biodiversity into local agri-food systems.
5. Integrate in the Urban Agenda for the EU Partnership on Food cultivated biodiversity and agroecological transition as a priority for sustainable food systems.
6. Establish a common framework enabling Member States to recognise and safeguard cultivated biodiversity as an essential component of the Right to Food.
7. Include local food policies and agroecological agri-food transformation within European research agendas, ensuring a stronger presence of local entities and municipal networks in European innovation platforms.

At the national level, decision-makers can:

1. Analyse the demand and supply of organic seeds and implement strategies to achieve 100% organic seed use in organic agriculture by 2036.
2. Develop national action plans, with adequate financing mechanisms for municipalities and civil society, in line with the FAO Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.
3. Establish a national support programme to enable regional and local authorities to foster sustainable procurement and integrate related sustainable procurement criteria (minimum organic and biodiverse foods) in food procurement tenders.
4. Include cultivated biodiversity and related cultural knowledge support in national food and climate strategies and just ecological transition plans.
5. Implement comprehensive labelling systems that enable food products to be rated based on multiple criteria, such as recognized production methods (e.g., organic), place of origin, seasonality, and breeding techniques used.

At the regional and provincial levels, authorities can support the transition by:

1. Integrating organic and locally produced food and local seeds in their food procurement tenders, and ensuring fair remuneration for farmers and agricultural workers.
2. Assessing the extent to which cultivated biodiversity is currently integrated into food systems, and implementing regional catalogues of local varieties as tools to promote and safeguard this diversity.
3. Launching regional funding programmes to support entrepreneurship in cultivated biodiversity, organic plant reproductive material and plant breeding, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises.
4. Developing regulatory frameworks that give priority to projects related to cultivated biodiversity within local initiatives such as agrarian parks and test spaces.
5. Facilitating knowledge transfer and capacity-building programmes for municipal staff and food policy stakeholders on the dynamic management and promotion of cultivated biodiversity.



2. https://foodpolicycoalition.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/EN_Manifesto-for-establishing-Minimum-Standards-for-Public-Canteens-across-the-EU.pdf

THE WAY FORWARD FROM GRANOLLERS

This Manifesto is a call to action from local authorities to all levels of public decision making for the implementation of integrated food policies that address cultivated biodiversity and agroecology-oriented food systems transformation and promote synergies both within and among institutional levels and local communities. It proposes a new narrative that repositions cultivated biodiversity as commons and a strategic tool for food system resilience and citizen well-being.

All efforts across all levels must align with the guidelines of multilateral agreements, such as the Universal human right to Food, the FAO's International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) and EU strategies.

At European and the national level, decision makers are called upon to translate these international and EU commitments into operational strategies, conservation programmes, and regulatory and financial instruments aimed at protecting and enhancing agricultural biodiversity.

Municipalities, local authorities, municipal networks and communities play a crucial role in promoting cultivated biodiversity in sustainable agri-food systems, thanks to their proximity to citizens, their in-depth knowledge of the territory and their ability to activate participatory processes. They are innovative political actors capable of shaping a sustainable food pact between nature and society.

Together we can become a driving force in the food systems transformation in Europe, based on resilience and sovereignty. This will make Europe a unique space of wellbeing and shared wealth.



ANNEX. STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The following proposals were gathered during dedicated workshops held at the *Let's Liberate Diversity Forum* in 2022 and 2023, as well as from the working group on the topic convened within the Spanish Network of Municipalities for Agroecology (Red de Municipios por la Agroecología). Additional inputs were provided during the I LiveSeeding Cities Meeting held in Milan (Italy) on 17 September 2024, as well as by members of the Steering Committee of the 1st European Symposium "Fostering Cultivated Biodiversity through Local Food Policies" and cities participating in the European webinar "Fostering Cultivated Biodiversity through Local Food Policies", organized with the MUFPP on the 27 January 2025.

The latest proposals were integrated in the [1st European Symposium "Fostering Cultivated Biodiversity through Local Food Policies"](#).



GOVERNANCE

1. Integrate cultivated biodiversity and local seed systems as a fundamental axis in food strategies and local food participatory governance bodies, such as Food Councils, incorporating all actors active on the topic and related themes, both specifically and transversally.
2. Elaboration of mapping of the local actors involved in the dynamic management of cultivated biodiversity, especially in the food chain, also identifying those who could potentially collaborate.
3. Design and delivery of training programs for municipal staff and partner companies of local administrations, focused on cultivated biodiversity and local seed systems.
4. Create and maintain a virtual common reference space to serve as a resource center for local authorities who want to initiate actions related to local cultivated biodiversity management and need access to information.
5. Creation and active participation in an intra-municipal working group to design long-term funded policies that integrate cultivated biodiversity and local seed production into different actions to promote organic and agroecology-oriented food systems carried out by the municipality.
6. Generation of inter-municipal working groups, especially linking large municipalities with those in rural environments, and multi-level forums (including also regional and cross-border collaborations), to generate proposals, analyse good practices, and evaluate food policies to boost cultivated biodiversity from a city region perspective.
7. Create permanent urban spaces for food neighbourhoods, as a public tool for generating meeting spaces, alliances, training, and enjoyment that places sustainable and biodiverse food for the entire population at the centre, allowing for strengthened interaction between local farmers, socio-cultural actors and citizens as well as sustaining rural-urban linkages.
8. Establish partnerships with local farmers, breeders, seed producers and organizations active in the dynamic management of cultivated biodiversity to develop joint projects that allow incorporating related elements into the agri-food system.
9. Development and execution of a framework for implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and accountability of local food policies to promote cultivated biodiversity in local systems.



SUSTAINABLE DIETS AND NUTRITION

1. Implementation of awareness-raising activities and educational projects developed with local communities – including vulnerable population groups – to promote the benefits and enjoyment of fresh, local, seasonal, biodiverse, organic food and plant-rich diets, highlighting culturally significant recipes and the differences with conventional and ultra-processed food.



2. Provide training for local actors involved in food processing, particularly those in mass catering (such as cooks and kitchen staff of schools, hospitals, elderly care homes, workplace canteens, public institutions and large-scale events), mild and artisanal food processing labs and community kitchens, focusing on organic diets based on cultivated biodiversity, artisanal and mild processing techniques and culturally significant and new recipes.
3. Development of projects that address the nutritional characteristics of cultivated biodiversity, especially landraces and heirloom varieties, and make the results visible to the population, with the objective of raising awareness about their positive characteristics.



SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY

1. Support local organic, social and solidarity economy projects integrating cultivated biodiversity and local seeds selection and production within the food chain, such as community supported agriculture initiatives, cooperative farmers and/or consumer shops and markets and processor cooperatives.
2. Facilitate the incorporation of local organic and biodiversity suppliers into food rights actions developed such as food banks or food coupon systems.
3. Provide adequate resources (especially training, land and seeds) for the production of culturally relevant crops for migrant communities.
4. Promote local gastronomy linked to local organic products and cultivated biodiversity resources in proposals aimed at responsible tourism.



FOOD PRODUCTION

1. Enhance access to appropriate materials by producing and providing, from municipal structures or through specific partnerships, organic seeds and seedlings, especially of varieties and populations that are local, traditional, resulting from organic, participatory and/or decentralised breeding, or linked to open-source systems, to local farmers and urban agriculture programs such as community and school gardens.
2. Strengthen community-based local seed systems by supporting the development of community seed banks, seed libraries and farmers' networks for organic farm-saved seeds, as well as supporting organic seed and breeding SME entrepreneurship, with a particular emphasis on seedling production.

3. Implement and support the increase of diversity availability for organic or agroecology-oriented production systems through breeding actions: recovery and testing of local and traditional varieties within the city region, implementation programs and/or support for organic, participatory and/or decentralised breeding with strong citizenship integration.
4. Offer training and awareness raising activities about the benefits and practices related to cultivated biodiversity in organic production aimed at young farmers to foster the next generation of biodiversity-conscious producers, as well as technical and coordination staff of agricultural production, such as farmers' associations and unions.
5. Implementation of organic community- and school-gardens in urban spaces, with adequate resources (including training and seeds), for the production of diverse, healthy and sustainable food by citizens.
6. Prioritize access to land in municipal land banks for organic projects that integrate cultivated biodiversity and local seed production, ensuring space for biodiversity-focused initiatives.
7. Generate organic and biodiverse demonstration gardens and arboreturns in landscaped areas such as urban parks and gardens to promote and showcase local plant diversity.



FOOD SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION

1. Promote the integration of local organic suppliers of cultivated biodiversity into municipal public food procurement strategies and programmes with adequate participation criteria and higher minimum standards for healthy and sustainable meals.
2. Support the introduction of heirloom varieties and populations and also the adapted ones resulting from organic breeding, participatory breeding, or open-source systems, across the local food value chain, including food processing and retail network.
3. Establish incubators, agri-food test spaces and local food hubs to support small-scale organic and agroecology-oriented agri-food initiatives. Priority should be given to community-linked projects and to those that promote the organic management of cultivated biodiversity across production, processing (with a focus on mild techniques), and/or distribution, with an emphasis on sustainable packaging and transport.



4. Run awareness campaigns and dissemination activities about the importance of small-scale farmers and local seed systems and to promote products from cultivated biodiversity (including as cultural heritage), specially within the school community, mass catering and small-scale retailers.
5. Create labels, and align them with existing ones, that highlight cultivated biodiversity as part of local agri-food systems throughout the food chain.
6. Develop adapted regulatory frameworks for artisanal and mild food processing, particularly tailored to small-scale initiatives working with cultivated biodiversity.



FOOD WASTE

1. Activate gleaning initiatives as a community-building activity linked to specific cultivated biodiversity and/or local seed production projects within organic and agroecology-oriented systems, in coordination with right-to-food and socio-labour inclusion programmes, to reduce food loss and waste.
2. Support local and community composting and water access in organic and agroecology-oriented farms and gardens that prioritise the production of cultivated biodiversity and/or locally adapted seeds.
3. Provide economic incentives to local small-scale businesses that integrate surplus food products derived from organically cultivated biodiversity and add value to them.



