

SAVEGRAINPUGLIA: A PROJECT TO SAFEGUARD LEGUME, CEREAL AND FORAGE LANDRACES OF APULIA REGION

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Legume, cereal and forage landraces, selected over the time by local farmers and well adapted to the climatic conditions of the Apulia region, are threatened by genetic erosion resulting from the gradual spread of more productive varieties. In order to collect, preserve and store these landraces in National or Regional gene banks (ex situ conservation) and/or directly in field under the strictly control of local farmers (on farm conservation, a type of in situ conservation) a regional safeguard project was established within the framework of the European Agricultural Programms for Rural Development. The primary objective of the project, named with the acronym SaVeGraINPuglia, is the collection, safeguard and preliminary evaluation and valorization of legume, cereal and forage landraces present in the Apulia region.

About 150 landraces were collected in different habitat and areas outside and inside protected areas where traditional agricultural practices still survive. The collected germplasm was stored and safeguarded both ex situ and in situ through the application of appropriate, international protocols. A preliminar characterisation is in progress. The project activities, coordinated by the Institute of Biosciences and Bio-Resources of the National Research Council (IBBR-CNR) was carried out in collaboration with 20 partners operating in the regional territory and belonging to public research organizations, universities, parks, private companies and associations.

The preliminary results of the project will be presented to emphasize the potential use of landraces for the promotion of local products and the development of sustainable agriculture.