



## Progress Report: GREECE

**Work Package:** WP01 - Regulation & policy framework regarding production, use, and transparency of organic seed

**Dissemination level:** Public

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## 1. About the report

This report is part of the Work Package 01 of the [LIVESEED project](#), which explores EU Member States in terms of their implementation and best practices connected to the EU Organic Regulations, in the contexts of national regulatory and policy frameworks.

After the [Country Report on the National Visit](#) and the [Report of the Regional/National Workshop](#), this Progress Report shall, on one hand, reflect on actions taken by stakeholders (**blue tables**). Those actions have been formulated and committed to during the National workshop by the Declaration of Organic Seed (see Annex I in Report of the Regional/National Workshop), but such actions might also have been carried out by the stakeholders without having made a respective commitment before. On the other hand, this report shall elaborate developments in regulation compared to the previous reports, ergo the previous years, of the LIVESEED project (**green tables**).

To promote an easy assesment, actions and developments are sub-categorized into different topics, similar to those used in the workshop report.

This report has been produced in the framework of the Horizon 2020-funded project LIVESEED. The main aim of LIVESEED is to boost the production and use of organic seeds and plant breeding for organic agriculture across Europe. It is co-ordinated by IFOAM EU, and its scientific coordinator is FIBL-CH.

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## 2. Evaluation of Progress

### 1.1. Database

#### 1.1.1. Committed actions of the Declaration of Organic Seeds

<b>Aegilops drafts a letter addressed to the ministry with all the recommendations regarding the organic seed database and circulate it among participants.</b>	
The letter (16/4) was sent to the authorities and also circulated among participants. A second letter (15/5) followed on the commitments of stakeholders related to the Common Declaration and a reminder(18/9) prior to reporting.	16/4/2020
<b>The Ministry responds to the letter and takes recommendations into consideration.</b>	
<p>The Ministry delayed the response due to COVID-19 situation during summer. The letter includes details on commitments undertaken and the following comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For some information suggested during the Athens workshop that the Database should have, related to the characteristics of propagated material, this requires interest from seed providers.</li> <li>2. Eradicating the registration fee in Database, setting the seed quantity thresholds for registration and making the quantity of seed offered invisible for the farmers in the Database are points that require the amendment of decision no. 295194 / 09, which is something that is examined to be continued in the near future.</li> <li>3. On September 16<sup>th</sup>, 4 new registrations have been completed (vetch, lupin and pea) and will soon be visible on the official Database webpage (Ministry of Rural Development). These small quantities of organic propagation material are a positive step in promoting organic seed. However, there are problems regarding the update of the database page. For this reason, these new registrations are not yet visible.</li> </ol>	1/10/2020

#### 1.1.2. Regulatory and general developments concerning the database

<b>Regulatory and general developments compared to previous years of the LIVESEED project</b>	
The previous year, no seed suppliers were registered on the database. It was empty. This might change with the registrations that are currently work in progress.	Period / Date

### 1.2. Derogations

#### 1.2.1. Committed Actions of the Declaration of Organic Seeds

<b>The Ministry publishes the most recent issue of the derogation report on their website.</b>	
The ministry has uploaded the most recent figures.	Spring 2020

#### 1.2.2. Regulatory and general developments concerning derogations

<b>Regulatory and general developments compared to previous years of the LIVESEED project</b>	
Reflection on developments/progress: Up to now, the empty database favors obtaining derogations. Recent developments regarding the database (new registrations) have therefore been important. Additionally, a number of local heritage varieties, adapted to low input, are in process of registration since last year. The procedure will hopefully finalize soon and make	Period / Date



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available new organic propagation material and seed. This will be a good investment in local seed production and has the potential to reduce derogations. On the other hand, the general discussion last year (Athens 2019 and Thessaloniki 2020 meetings) on ways to limit the number of derogations was very vivid last year and popular among certifiers, authorities, seed experts and farmers.

### 1.3. Expert Group

#### 1.3.1. Committed Actions of the Declaration of Organic Seeds

##### The Ministry commits to activate the scientific committee for organic farming.

Due to COVID\_19 urgency crisis, the scientific committee that has been already foreseen will be activated as soon as the circumstances allow it.

Period  
/  
Date

### 1.4. Research

#### 1.4.1. Non-committed, concrete actions by stakeholders (may be left empty)

##### AEGILOPS sent two abstracts to 18<sup>th</sup> Greek Plant Breeders Conference a. on LIVESEED national recommendations on organic seed and breeding role and b. on landrace vegetable organic selection criteria

Reflection on developments/progress: 18<sup>th</sup> Plant Breeders Conference was planned for October 2020 in Volos but was cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Period  
/  
Date

##### AEGILOPS, IPBGR, University of Thessaloniki, Union of North Greece Organic Growers and other stakeholders of agrifood chain submitted common research proposals for national funding on heritage varieties conservation including organic breeding, registration and seed production

Some proposals have been accepted in the first phase.

Autumn  
2019 -  
summer  
2020

##### IPBGR enhances research related to organic breeding and seed production

IPBGR has an organic field for research on cereals and there is an increasing interest from researchers from all crops to be involved in related research topics. Recent related IPBGR research results were to be announced at the 18<sup>th</sup> National Breeding Conference (Volos, October 2020), which was cancelled and postponed for the next year. There is a multilevel cooperation between AEGILOPS and IPBGR, including LIVESEED, Farmers Pride, Fruitrees2Safeguard, and also national research projects. Organic Cereal field trials of Kostas Koutis (AEGILOPS) were hosted at IPBGR fields for the period 2019- 2020 in cooperation with the Greek Gene Bank and Cereal Institute and will be continued.

Period  
/  
Date

#### 1.4.2. Regulatory and general developments concerning research

##### Regulatory and general developments compared to previous years of the LIVESEED project

Reflection on developments/progress: There are ongoing activities and synergies exploited

Period  
/  
Date



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regarding research related to organic breeding and seed. Biodiversity conservation bodies, breeders and end users are key actors of interaction in this field.	
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## 1.5. Training/Information/Communication

### 1.5.1. Committed Actions of the Declaration of Organic Seeds

<b>The Union of organic farmers of northern Greece organizes a workshop on organic seed at the Agrotica fair in February 2020.</b>	
Reflection on developments/progress: The workshop focused on the status on organic seed and new organic regulation (presentation to farmers by Kostas Koutis, AEGILOPS) and drew organic growers' attention.	2/02/2020
<b>IPBGR sets up a course on organic seed production, if there is sufficient interest.</b>	
Reflection on developments/progress: Due to the COVID-19 situation, such an activity did not occur but will be foreseen for the next period if COVID situation allows.	Period / Date
<b>The Agroecology network of Greece puts education and training on the issue of organic seeds on the agenda when meeting in September 2020.</b>	
Reflection on developments/progress: Due to Cov19, the training scheduled for September 2020 was cancelled but a new date is planned for spring 2021. Also, in October 2020, an e-mail will be delivered to all Agroecology network members to inform them about organic seed developments. Additionally, the network continues to try to inform the members through social media on the relevant issue	Period / Date
<b>The Union of organic farmers of northern Greece invites Jiannis Mylonas from IPBGR as a speaker to elaborate on advantages of organic seed at the Agrotica fair in February 2020.</b>	
Kostas Koutis (AEGILOPS) spoke instead of Jiannis Mylonas, who was invited but could not attend on that day and hour.	2/02/2020
<b>Rallou Tsingou provides suggestions for breeders on how to organize a platform in the internet to connect young farmers</b>	
Reflection on developments/progress: The commitment has not been done as there was no interest from the breeders to create a platform through social media. It had been proposed to researchers to create a group where they could announce research results and approach young farmers, having in mind that young farmers in Greece are very familiar to social media, especially to facebook.	Period / Date
<b>Kiriakos Palasidis (Association of Organic Farming Certifiers) disseminates information about advantages of organic seed to organic auditors and agronomists.</b>	
Reflection on developments/progress: The Association of Organic Farming Certifiers (through Mr Palasidis) encouraged organic auditors to inform organic farmers during certification field visits about the benefits of using organic seed.	Period / Date

### 1.5.2. Non-committed, concrete actions by stakeholders (may be left empty)

<b>AEGILOPS organised workshop on organic fruit breeding and new organic seed regulation at the AGROTICA Fair in February 2020</b>	
Reflection on developments/progress: The workshop was attended by nearly 50 people (representatives of organic farmers cooperatives, breeders, national research institutes, nursery keepers, national and regional authorities, seed savers, professional organic agrifood stakeholders and growers). ). It focused on organic fruit breeding and fruit biodiversity	Period / Date
<b>National authorities (Ministry) provided information on new organic regulation at the workshop organised by AEGILOPS at the AGROTICA Fair in February 2020</b>	
Reflection on developments/progress: The participants asked a lot of questions and discussion helped to clarify many aspects of the new regulation and the need for cooperation among stakeholders and authorities to implement the new regulation and contribute to the further development of the organic	31/01/2020



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sector.	
<b>AEGILOPS organised workshop on organic vegetable selection from Cretan heritage varieties and breeding in summer 2020</b>	
Reflection on developments/progress: The workshop was attended by nearly 40 people, mostly professional vegetable growers, retailers, chefs and scientists and investigated opportunities for future organic seed production from selected cretan heritage vegetable varieties.	1-2/08/2020
<b>The Union of Organic farmers of northern Greece organizes a workshop on seed production</b>	
The workshop will be organized in mid-October 2020 and will focus on vegetable crops.	Period / Date

### 1.5.3. Regulatory and general developments concerning training/information/communication

<b>Regulatory and general developments compared to previous years of the LIVESEED project</b>	
There is high and growing activity in this field. LIVESEED outcomes (cross visits, national and international workshops, research and practice) and information from IFOAM was disseminated to stakeholders and played a key role in the development of synergies and increased awareness related to organic seed and breeding issues. Information on organic seed laws and policy increased the interest of stakeholders for participation in the co-evolution and implementation of regulations and will affect policy makers.	Period / Date

## 1.6. Production and Use of Organic Seeds

### 1.6.1. Committed Actions of the Declaration of Organic Seeds

<b>Giorgos Duomous and BioFRU get involved in organic seed production</b>	
Giorgos Doumos had been involved in the process of einkorn variety registration in cooperation with Kostas Koutis (AEGILOPS). Biofru , as AEGILOPS Focal point at Kastoria region, holds and enhances a mother nursery collection of fruit heritage varieties of apple and pear and keeps selecting the most promising material for organic seedling production in the near future. Both Giorgos Doumos and Biofru are actively involved in the AEGILOPS task force group on organic seed production.	Period / Date
<b>Farmers associations do an inventory among their members to find out how many farmers would be interested to become organic seed producers and what kind of training they would need.</b>	
The Union of Organic Farmers of Northern Greece will organize a training workshop in mid-October 2020 on organic seed production where organic farmers will be trained and communicate their interest in being professionally involved.	Period / Date

### 1.6.2. Non-committed, concrete actions by stakeholders (may be left empty)

<b>AEGILOPS created an internal task force for organic seed production and is making an online platform for organic growers' products of its network and organic nurseries also</b>	
The seed production task force will elaborate opportunities for varietal registration and seed production in various crops (cereal, vegetable, legumes, aromatic and fruits). The online platform of products (crops and nursery) will be uploaded in autumn 2020 and will be updated every year. It is foreseen to add organic seed producers to the platform.	2020



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### 1.6.3. Regulatory and general developments concerning production and use of organic seeds

Regulatory and general developments compared to previous years of the LIVESEED project	
There is a growing interest in seed production, valorising biodiversity and heritage crops or varieties. The interest comes from seed savers organizations (AEGILOPS) and organic farmers, mainly. There is no interest yet from seed companies except nurseries (vegetable ,aromatic, fruit).	Period / Date

## 1.7. Other

### 1.7.1. Committed Actions of the Declaration of Organic Seeds

Kiriakos Palasidis (Association of Organic Farming Certifiers) puts organic seed high on the agenda in meetings with the ministry of organic agriculture	
Mr. Palasidis, who was the representative of Organic Farming Certifiers, informed all the members of the Association about the results of the LIVESEED meeting in Athens (2019) and they agreed that each of them would push the organic seed issue when contacting the national authorities. They are appealing for a reduction in derogations within the next two years.	Period / Date

### 1.7.2. Non-committed, concrete actions by stakeholders (may be left empty)

Greek IFOAM council members support seed issues	(Progress)
In the last gathering of the Greek members of IFOAM (held in Thessaloniki, 17/9/2020), it was decided that a letter would be written to the Ministry of Agriculture to promote organic agriculture in the context of the new regulation. In this open letter that will be also signed by other stakeholders and that will be sent before the end of October 2020. A special paragraph will be dedicated to the promotion of organic seed.	Period / Date

### 1.7.3. Other regulatory and general developments

Regulatory and general developments compared to previous years of the LIVESEED project	
There is a broad range of activities supporting organic seed issues as a result of LIVESEED activities, affecting directly and indirectly Greece and greek organic sector stakeholders. This will help Greece to be able to implement the new organic regulation and contribute to its future development .	Period / Date

## 3. Summary of Progress

- New registrations to a previously empty database is a step in the right direction, as well as the eradication of the registration fee that was in conflict with the organic regulation. Improvements in the functionality and usability of the database still have to be implemented to make it easier for seed producers to place their offers.



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- A number of local heritage varieties are in the process of registration and will lead to additional organic propagation material and seed on the market. However, the low amount of seed on the database still makes it very easy to obtain a derogation and decisive steps to limit derogations will have to be taken the develop the market for organic seed in Greece.
- A scientific committee on organic farming is planned to be established as soon as the public health situation allows it. The work of this group could be crucial if it will receive the mandate to work on a no-derogation list.
- Multilevel cooperation in research on organic breeding is a promising model for the future if funding can be maintained. The organic field trials in 2019/2020 are another crucial step forward and it is good news that they will be continued.
- Information dissemination on organic seeds during trade fairs, to organic auditors and agronomists. In addition, workshops on organic fruit and vegetable breeding have been organized. Together, those communication and training events play an essential and valuable role in informing stakeholders in Greece about the benefits and requirements regarding organic seed.
- An internal task force for organic seed production and variety registration has been established, which is a great example for how ‘internal expert groups’ can also contribute to the production and use of organic seeds.

## Annex I: Overview of Organic Regulation

The following tables show relevant articles in the organic regulation and give support to the evaluation on national developments/progresses in this report.

### 1.1. Database (T1)

EC No 889/2008	
<b>Article 48: Database</b>	<p>1. Each Member State shall ensure that a computerised database is established for the listing of the varieties for which seed or seed potatoes obtained by the organic production method are available on its territory.</p> <p>2. The database shall be managed either by the competent authority of the Member State or by an authority or body designated for this purpose by the Member State, hereinafter referred to as ‘manager of the database’. Member States may also designate an authority or a private body in another country.</p>
<b>Article 49: Registration</b>	<p>3. Each Member State shall decide in which period of the year the database has to be regularly updated for each species or group of species cultivated on its territory. The database shall hold information with regard to that decision.</p>
<b>Article 51: Registered information</b>	<p>1. For each registered variety and for each supplier, the database referred to in Article 48 shall contain at least the following information:</p> <p>(a) the scientific name of the species and the variety;</p> <p>(b) the name and contact details of the supplier or his representative;</p> <p>(c) the area where the supplier can deliver the seed or seed potatoes to the user in the usual time needed for the delivery;</p> <p>(d) the country or region in which the variety is tested and approved [...]</p> <p>(e) the date from which the seed or seed potatoes will be available;</p>



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	<p>(f) the name and/or code number of the control authority or control body in charge of the control of the operator</p> <p>2. The supplier shall immediately inform the manager of the database if any of the registered varieties are no longer available. The amendments shall be recorded in the database.</p> <p>3. Besides the information specified in paragraph 1, the database shall contain a list of the species listed in Annex X (Species for which organically produced seed or seed potatoes are available in sufficient quantities and for a significant number of varieties [...]).</p>
<b>Article 52: Access to information</b>	<p>1. The information in the database referred to in Article 48 shall be available through the internet, free of cost, to the users of seed or seed potatoes and to the public. [...]</p> <p>2. The Member States shall ensure that all users [of seed and seed potatoes] are informed, at least once a year, about the system and how to obtain the information in the database.</p>
<b>Article 53: Registration -fee</b>	<p>3. Each registration may be subject to the levying of a fee, which shall represent the cost of inserting and maintaining the information in the database [...]. The competent authority of the Member State shall approve the amount of the fee charged by the manager of the database.</p>

## 1.2. Derogations (T2)

EC No 889/2008	
<b>Article 49: Registration</b>	<p>2. Any variety which has not been registered in the database shall be considered as unavailable.</p>
<b>Article 6: Specific principles applicable to agricultural activities</b>	<p>(i) without prejudice to Article 14 of Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 and to the national plant variety rights granted under Member States' national law, the possibility for farmers to use plant reproductive material obtained from their own farms in order to foster genetic resources adapted to the special conditions of organic production;</p>
<b>Article 45: Use of seed or vegetative propagating material not obtained by the</b>	<p>3. Species for which it is established that organically produced seed or seed potatoes are available in sufficient quantities and for a significant number of varieties in all parts of the Community are set out in Annex X. The species listed in Annex X may not be subject of authorisations pursuant to paragraph 1(b), unless these are justified by one of the purposes referred to in paragraph 5(d).</p> <p>4. Member States may delegate the responsibility for granting the authorisation referred to in paragraph 1(b) to another public administration under their supervision or to the control authorities or control bodies referred to in Article 27 of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007.</p>



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<p><b>organic production method</b></p>	<p>5. Authorisation to use seed or seed potatoes not obtained by the organic production method may only be granted in the following cases:</p> <p>(a) where no variety of the species which the user wants to obtain is registered in the database referred to in Article 48</p> <p>(b) where no supplier, meaning an operator who markets seed or seed potatoes to other operators, is able to deliver the seed or seed potatoes before sowing or planting in situations where the user has ordered the seed or seed potatoes in reasonable time;</p> <p>(c) where the variety which the user wants to obtain is not registered in the database referred to in Article 48 and the user is able to demonstrate that none of the registered alternatives of the same species are appropriate and that the authorisation therefore is significant for his production;</p> <p>(d) where it is justified for use in research, test in small-scale field trials or for variety conservation purposes agreed by the competent authority of the Member State.</p>
<p><b>Article 45: Use of seed or vegetative propagating material not obtained by the organic production method</b></p>	<p>6. The authorisation shall be granted before the sowing of the crop.</p> <p>7. The authorisation shall be granted only to individual users for one season at a time and the authority or body responsible for the authorisations shall register the quantities of seed or seed potatoes authorised.</p> <p>8. By way of derogation from paragraph 7, the competent authority of the Member State may grant to all users a general authorisation:</p> <p>(a) for a given species when and in so far as the condition laid down in paragraph 5(a) is fulfilled;</p> <p>b. for a given variety when and in so far as the conditions laid down in paragraph 5(c) are fulfilled</p> <p>9. Authorisation may only be granted during periods for which the database is updated in accordance with Article 49(3)</p>
<p><b>Article 54: Annual report</b></p>	<p>1. The authorities or bodies designated to grant authorisations in accordance with Article 45 shall register all authorisations and shall make this information available in a report to the competent authority of the Member State and to the manager of the database.</p>
<p><b>Article 55: Summary report</b></p>	<p>The competent authority of the Member State shall, before 31 March each year, collect the reports and send a summary report covering all authorisations of the Member State from the previous calendar year to the Commission and to the other Member States.[...] The information shall be published in the database [...]. The competent authority may delegate the task of collecting the reports to the manager of the database.</p>



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