

INNOVATION AND RESEARCH TO SUPPORT THE NATIONAL SEED PLAN

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Innovation and research to support the National seed plan (PRIS2) is an Inter-regional three-year project coordinated by the Department of Applied Biology, University of Perugia, and is aimed at defining the conditions and methods for providing Italian farmers seeds of high quality, necessary to support agriculture in a phase of profound transformation.

The project started in 2005 and involved 6 Italian Universities and 8 Research Institutions, investigated the most important aspects of conventional and organic seed activities. For the most important crops (cereals, vegetable and forages species), suitable production areas, innovations capable of improving the production route, rules to obtain GMO-free seeds were identified. The possible co-existence of conventional and GM crops have been evaluated during the 3 years of the project. A catalogue of annual and perennial species have been created and the most suitable varieties, for organic seed production have been identified. Moreover the techniques for high quality seed production have been defined.

For seeds to be used as a mean for biodiversity conservation, the project has considered several aspects: survey of national and regional programs for germplasm collection, evaluation and conservation; establishment of an inter-regional germplasm conservation network; landrace definition and identification of parameters to be used for landraces registration and commercialization. The activity results of the 3 years will be presented in November 2008 in Perugia during the final conference.