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Fostering sustainable legume-based farming systems and agri-feed and food chains in the EU

**Milestone MS21**

***Conclusions of T4.4 needed for policy practicability and good practices***

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Table of Content

[1. Summary 3](#_Toc73007372)

[2. Third Round Of Workshops 4](#_Toc73007373)

[**2.1 The National Workshops 4**](#_Toc73007374)

[**2.2 The EU Level Workshop 5**](#_Toc73007375)

[3. Results 5](#_Toc73007376)

[**3.1 Future Strategy 6**](#_Toc73007377)

# Summary

The present document represents the output from Task 4.4, the third and last series of national workshops. The purpose of the meeting is to identify best practices and perspective improvements in policy instruments by discussing with experts and stakeholders in the sectors. By gathering their views across seven European nations, the objective of the meetings is to evaluate the of defined policy instruments towards increasing the production of legumes in Europe. Different approaches have been used to collect and to validate the results of the task T4.4 presented in this document. The main contribution comes from the preliminary results of consultations with experts during the rounds workshops under the task T4.1 and T4.2. At the same time, research on existing literature, in T4.1, has enabled us to analyse the impact of policies affecting legumes and to perform a diagnostic of current policies in order to identify emerging policy needs. Proposals for instruments and best practices were also sketched out to enable emerging policy developments such as the CAP post 2020, the Farm to Fork Strategy and other elements of the European Green deal (e.g EU Biodiversity strategy for 2030) to support the mainstreaming of legume production across the EU.

The information gathered was also integrated with the results from the webinar number 7 (on policy). The webinar allowed to further identify and analyze the existence of certain policy needs at national level that explain the heterogeneity of conditions across the EU in the context of legumes.

To conclude, the results presented are built also on the output of several WPs in the project, through the analysis of their deliverables and notes taken at meetings and internal workshops.

# Third round of workshops

The task T4.4. developed through a series of workshops which objective was to identify good practices and indications for the improved design of policy instruments. Feedback was gathered at the workshops regarding the practicability of the proposed measures and candidate implementation pathways. Attention was particularly given to Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), EU Strategy for Protein Crops (EC, 2019), Farm to Fork Strategy and other elements of the European Green deal (e.g., EU Biodiversity strategy for 2030) (EC, 2020b). Moreover, the inputs collected from the national workshops were validated and combined with a large body of documentation as academic paper and reports from other similar Horizon2020 projects.

The outcome of the national workshops was then presented to a wider group of stakeholders from across the EU, including representatives from the EU Commission, in an additional workshop at Eu Level on the 24th March 2021 in conjunction with WP5.

### **The National workshops**

National workshops were held, between March and May 2021, on remote, due to the Covid-19 emergency, in Italy, France, Germany, Latvia (with representatives from Lithuania), and the UK. Due to difficulties, workshops in Denmark and in Portugal were not conducted, but they were replaced by the series of webinars that were organized for the dissemination of the results acquired during the project.

A total of 31 experts from across the EU were consulted and the participants were mainly researchers, producers and representatives from Government. The group of participants at workshops in T4.4 was a mix of experts, stakeholders and policy makers (or their technical staff). It was envisaged that the same group already participating in T4.1 and T4.2 participated also in the last round of workshops.

Table 1 : Sectoral representation at T4.2 Workshops

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Date | No. of attendees | Producers | Government | Researchers | Advisors |
| Germany | 7th April | 8 |   | 1 | 5  | 2 |
| Italy | 2nd March | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| UK | 29th April | 5 |  | 2 | 3 |  |
| France | 30th April | 4 |  | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Lithuania | 29th April | 9 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 1 |

The sessions started with general presentation of the project and with an overview of general policy needs in the context of legumes. In particular, some insights were introduced from WP1, WP2, WP3 & WP4 and other H2020 project. The session of the workshop was then divided in two main parts:

* A detailed presentation of the results collected from previous round of workshops and elaborated with the aim to encourage the consequent discussion. The presentation was provided by the WP4 leader Unibo. During the presentation different policy measures were introduced and proposed according to different policy areas (related to trade, market, production-consumption, and other areas) as a result from the experts’ insights gathered from previous round of national workshops (T4.2).
* A general moderated discussion focused on the content of the presentation. The participants’ reflected on the practicability of the policy mix and models proposed, and their perspectives on the identification of policy needs, instruments and intervention pathways associated with emerging policy developments. The discussion was also guided by moderators, and open questions helped gather clear information and suggestions. However, policy related to legumes were not differentiated into food, feed and oil policies. Each region based their discussion around the category of legume that was most relevant to their context.

### **The EU level workshop**

The EU level workshop was held on 24th of March 2021 and the session was attended by 24 experts and stakeholders from different organizations and institution across the EU. This included representatives from the EU Commission, LegValue partners, other European projects, Technical Institutes, and attendees of the national workshops.

The EU workshop was based around a discussion of the summary outputs from previous round of national workshops aiming at gathering more comprehensive perspectives of the policy needs, instruments and intervention pathways which could improve legume production in the EU.

Four different transition paths were introduced during the first part of the session in the context of WP5. The 4 scenarios formed the basis of the discussion of the participants own perspectives of the specific policy instruments. The stakeholders were invited to reflect on the appropriateness and effectiveness of different policy tools for each transition path, uncovering their robustness and effectiveness for the future. The participants were asked to express their opinion through a Mentimeter survey, on the most suitable instruments proposed based on the scenario presented.

# Results

All the results obtained in the III round of workshops (regional and EU-level) are presented in more details in the D4.4 submitted in May 2021. Before the submission, the D4.4 has been circulated among LegValue partners with the aim of collecting further input based on the experience they developed in the context of the project. The process of crossing information from the primary data (participants’ comments and considerations) with documents and stakeholders’ ex post consideration allowed an additional validation of the results obtained in the WP4. The main results of the third round of workshops can be summarized as follows:

* The role of research as a driver in boosting profitability across all actors in the supply chain. Addressing technical issues and low profitability through R&D is essential. Innovation measures are considered one of the key mechanisms that could reach the sustainable and environmental objectives in the medium-long term, especially in breeding and processing technology.
* The need for coordination of different policy instruments. It is important to get organized to exploit market opportunities. The increasing demand needs could be better met through market development and appropriate market organization. There is need for developing different markets for legumes and more effort has been asked in developing multiple supply options from the same crops (e.g., PDO, PGI as niches products).
* Policies should be seen as an instrument to create, develop or strengthen legumes value chains, rather than a mere issue of supporting cultivation. This implies a role of policy as a facilitator of private initiative, that can use a variety of instruments (contracts).
* Need to better capture externalities in order to evidence and enable long term sustainability. As a fact, legume production can reduce different negative externalities in agricultural production such as use of nitrogen fertilizers. They contribute to agro-biodiversity and substitute for protein-rich meals as feed, which are often derived from imported crops. Many of these benefits occur as externalities and need to be internalized either through consumer premium prices or public support.
* No dedicated policy instrument and need for a consistent policy mix. The legume cultivation is now characterized by being affected by a number of policy instruments while a dedicated policy instrument is not available. This is also expected to remain in the future. A dedicated policy for legumes was not advocated anyway from stakeholders, while many of the existing different tools and are considered to be valid. Instead, it was commonly agreed that there is need for a better coordination of different policy instruments, in order to identify the right policy mix in each area.
* Higher attention to demand side addressing consumers’ preferences and improving instruments such as public food procurement (e.g. including public food procurement and dietary guidelines, focus on creating a better public perception of legume grains or legume-based products as food). Good eating initiatives promoting good-nutrition and –health have the potential to transform such provisions. Also convenience- or snack-foods industries may have a role as well as educational frameworks on cooking legumes in easy-to-follow recipes.

### **Future Strategy**

The presence of government representatives during the workshops enabled a broader discussion around how the detail generated from the EU level workshop and those from the national workshops could be used to inform good practice, options and recommendations for National and EU level policies. The output from the meetings reveals that the current picture is characterized by the absence of a dedicated legume policy. On the other hand, legumes are affected by several policy measures, mostly dedicated to more general aims, such as crop diversification or promotion of organic farming. Some dedicated instruments do exist and will remain, for example coupled support for legumes in the 1st pillar. However, their use is left to local choices and do in fact mainly compensate some short term gaps in profitability.

The results highlighted a high degree of heterogeneity among the countries involved, with a different focus of the policies currently in place (e.g. stimulating demand rather than supply) or with a different degree of interaction between all actors within the value chain. Taking this into account, it will be important to develop a strategic approach to policy mix. The main challenge is to develop, a strategic approach at EU-level, enabling different and effective implementation at national level. Therefore, each MS has a key role in implementing the future CAP at national level. These plans will combine a wide range of targeted interventions addressing the MS’s specific needs and delivering tangible results in relation to EU-level objectives, while contributing to the Green Deal ambition. The strategic plans need to pave the way for sustainable agriculture, forestry, and rural development in the EU.