

2025

Action Plan to increase the availability of
small quantities of seed potatoes for
Local and heritage/ varieties
(Latvia, Estonia, Finland)

POLICY BRIEF



Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



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RESILIENT ECONOMIES AND COMMUNITIES

MainPotRe



SUMMARY

PURPOSE

Provide a practical, durable **Action Plan**, combining regulatory recommendations, education, and promotion, to increase the availability of small quantities of healthy seed potatoes of heritage/local varieties for end-users (small growers, municipalities, NGOs), guide organisations across the value chain

PROBLEM

Small growers require small quantities of disease-free seed, but systems are primarily designed for larger-scale production. Heritage/local varieties are vital for food security, resilience, biodiversity, and cultural identity, yet access to healthy seed is limited and legal pathways are unclear or sometimes restrictive. Informal exchange poses phytosanitary risks.

ACTION PLAN PILLARS

1) Policy and regulation: targeted amendments to EU and national rules to enable eased small-lot supply for end-users, and remove restrictive provisions (e.g., “region of origin only” and annual quantity caps for conservation varieties).

2) Education and knowledge transfer: seminars, field days, school/vocational integration, and guidance from research institutes and genebanks to ensure safe use of healthy seed.

3) Promotion: practical steps on packaging/labeling, demand collection, and diversified sales channels to match small-grower needs

EXPECTED IMPACT

Increased access to healthy seed of heritage/local varieties; safeguarded plant health; stronger food security and living culinary heritage; clear, directly usable tools for ministries and agencies.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

HERITAGE/LOCAL POTATOES MATTER

Locally adapted varieties fit Northern Baltic conditions, support resilient and self-sufficient food systems, conserve biodiversity and culinary heritage, and have substantial food-security value

CURRENT CHALLENGES

- Seed availability: systems favour uniform packaging; small packages of diverse varieties are often not profitable for producers; thus, access for local varieties is limited.
- Legal barriers: EU (2002/56/EC, 2008/62/EC) and national transposition are geared to commercial scale; derogations for final users are underused. Conservation-variety rules restrict marketing to the region of origin and set annual caps; registration can be complex and costly.
- Phytosanitary risk: informal exchange spreads diseases.
- Knowledge gaps: declining grower and consumer knowledge; local and heritage varieties risk invisibility without targeted promotion.
- Country differences: no conservation-listed potatoes in Latvia; Estonia has several; Finland has PDO cases and a limited, small-package certified supply, no registered conservation varieties.

ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW

POLICY AND REGULATORY RECOMMENDATIONS

EU-LEVEL

Enable cross-border access for conservation varieties by removing 'region of origin only' marketing limits and removing annual quantity caps.

LATVIA

- Simplify registration and reporting for conservation varieties; remove registration fee.
- Remove restriction to Latvia-only marketing for conservation varieties; lift annual per-variety cap.
- Allow different-size packaging within the same lot; make use of EU derogations for seed preparation for end-users.
- Recognize synonyms across countries once genetic identity is confirmed.

ESTONIA

- Maintain two-track recognition (heritage vs former commercial), with DUS waivers when documentation is adequate; explicitly define 'heritage variety' in law.
- Review conservation-variety seed production rules (distances, sampling/testing, labelling)
- Remove Estonia-only marketing restriction.

FINLAND

- Create simplified, legislation-based small-lot certification pathway for heritage/local varieties.
- Remove Finland-only marketing restriction for conservation varieties.
- Establish a legal framework for limited exchanges by small growers.
- Introduce a conservation-variety category in the national list with lower registration requirements.

ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW

EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

GOAL

Build capacity to use healthy seed, maintain varietal diversity, and sustain cultural heritage.

ACTIONS

- Seminars and training for farmers, gardeners, and small-scale growers.
- Field days/demonstration plots.
- Awareness-raising on nutritional/cultural value and plant-health.
- School and vocational integration.
- Guidelines and materials from research institutes and genebanks.

PROMOTION

GOAL

Make small-lot seed potatoes of local varieties practically available, and visible to users

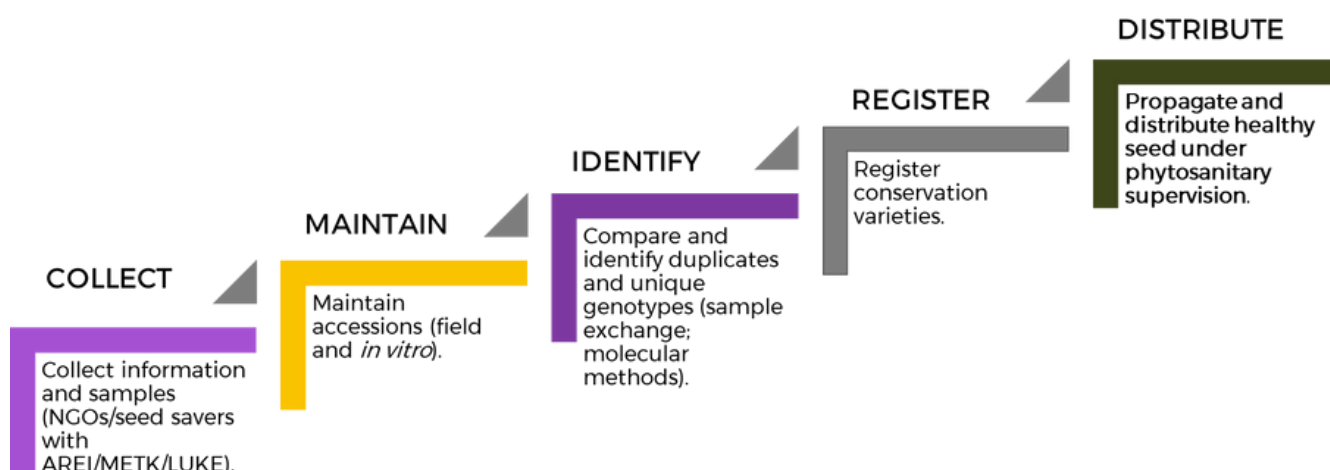
ACTIONS

- Provide information on available varieties and collect demand/pre-orders.
- Enhance labels with agronomic traits, cooking quality and nutritional value.
- Broaden sales channels: packing-point direct sales, local markets/fairs, online shops.

OTHER SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

COLLECTION, MAINTENANCE, IDENTIFICATION, PROPAGATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF HERITAGE VARIETIES

PATHWAY



PRACTICAL NOTES ON SEED PRODUCTION AND PACKAGING

- Small-lot seed certification model for heritage/local varieties for end users.
- Bulk certification and weight-based retail to end users, accompanied by a statement on quality/origin.
- Align packaging/labeling rules so different pack sizes of the same lot can be offered.

CONCLUSIONS

The Action Plan provides policy-ready measures and a practical pathway to make small quantities of healthy seed of heritage/local potatoes available to end users, while safeguarding plant health. The policy and regulatory pillar is decisive; education and promotion make it tangible and durable. For full details, see the complete **Action Plan**.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Area	Key actions	Lead/partners	When	Expected impact
Policy and regulation	Remove restrictions and caps; simplify registration; permit mixed sizes; apply derogations	Ministries; seed authorities; AREI/METK/LUKE	2025 onward	Legal pathways for small-lot certified heritage seed
Education	Seminars, field days, school/vocational modules; materials	AREI, METK, LUKE, NGOs, municipalities	Annual	Better knowledge; responsible use of healthy seed
Promotion	Demand collection; small packs; enhanced labels; markets/online	AREI/METK seed units; LUKE/FFA/seed producers	Seasonal	Practical access for small growers; informed choices
Collection and identification	Gather accessions; in vitro/field maintenance; molecular ID; register and distribute	AREI, METK, LUKE; state authorities	Ongoing	Clear synonyms, legal cross-border distribution



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