

ENEA,

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At **ENEA**, we envision the promotion of legumes not merely as a return to tradition, but as a strategic "leap forward" toward a more resilient Mediterranean agri-food system. In a region increasingly challenged by climate change and water scarcity, legumes represent a vital resource for environmental sustainability and food security.

Our vision is rooted in the dual role of these crops. From an ecological perspective, legumes are natural "bio-fertilizers"; their nitrogen-fixing capabilities are essential for soil health and for reducing the carbon footprint of Mediterranean agriculture. From a socio-economic and health standpoint, they are the heart of the Mediterranean Diet. Revitalizing their cultivation means supporting local biodiversity, fostering rural development, and providing the population with high-quality, plant-based proteins that are essential for a healthy lifestyle. Some specific topics of these aspects are investigated in European and Italian projects in which ENEA is involved, like Delisoil, Soil Hub, EJP Soil, EcoReady, SUS-MIRRI and Multisoil, where the agroecology holistic approach is the framework for the **One Health strategy**.

ENEA's expectations for the BEANS network are high. We believe the network should act as a bridge between advanced research and practical market applications. Our commitment is to provide scientific and technological support—from genetic improvement and sustainable farming practices to the development of innovative food products—ensuring that the Mediterranean can lead the global transition towards sustainable protein sources.

Through BEANS, we expect to strengthen cross-border collaborations that harmonize production standards and raise consumer awareness. Promoting legumes is not just about farming; it is about building a circular economy that respects our shared heritage while embracing technological innovation. ENEA is ready to play a leading role in this journey, ensuring that legumes become a pillar of the Mediterranean's ecological and economic resilience.