



## INCREASE Citizen Science Experiment 5<sup>th</sup> Round (2025)



**Calling on pulses lovers, hobby gardeners and leisure scientists to join the award-winning INCREASE Citizen Science Experiment: Registration for the next round of the INCREASE Citizen Science Experiment open till 15th March 2025.**

Over the last four years, the INCREASE project has not only seen an incredible interest from citizens in actively supporting its research. The [Citizen Science Experiment has also been awarded the European Union Prize for Citizen Science](#) in its quest to foster agrobiodiversity by inviting European citizens to actively conserve and characterise diverse bean varieties.

To this end, more than 20,000 dedicated citizens from across Europe have so far participated in the [INCREASE Citizen Science Experiment](#). The participants grew many different bean varieties during the last four growing seasons, collected invaluable scientific insights on their beans and nurtured a wonderful community that wants to see and create an environment in which all humans can thrive – now and in the future.

**The Citizen Science Experiment invites anyone who wants to contribute to science and who owns a smartphone and a field, garden, terrace or balcony, as well as the required enthusiasm**

**to grow six different bean varieties of the common bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) during next year's growth season.**

As part of the Citizen Science Experiment, each new participant will receive seeds of diverse old bean varieties to grow and take care of while documenting their development through uploading photos and scoring traits in the INCREASE Citizen Science app, called "INCREASE CSA". This enables the INCREASE team to evaluate the characteristics of these diverse varieties and eventually enhance agrobiodiversity in Europe.

The "INCREASE CSA" app is [free to download](#) from all digital platforms and available in different languages. Citizens can exclusively register their participation via the app and use it to document all observations during the growing period.

The Citizen Science Experiment is embedded into the European research project INCREASE which involves 25 international partners with the important goal to valorise agrobiodiversity and promote food legumes consumption and cultivation in Europe. The experiment is guided by the European Commission principles "open science, open innovation and open to the world" and INCREASE takes advantage of digital technologies to make science and innovation more collaborative and global.

More information on the project and the experiment can be accessed on the [INCREASE website](#) and through [explanatory videos](#). Further updates and news are available via the INCREASE social media channels:

Facebook: [pulses.increase](#)  
Instagram: [pulsesincrease/](#)  
YouTube: [PulsesINCREASE](#)



**Science is not limited to scientists. Everyone can get involved.**

Public participation in scientific research is becoming more and more crucial in increasing everyone's understanding of science and its benefit to society. Most importantly, it advances scientific research itself. ...and it equally plays a crucial part in INCREASE. Here, we are all about beans! **The Citizen Science Experiment**, conducted as part of the project, calls on all interested citizens **to voluntarily contribute to and test an innovative decentralised approach to seed conservation, multiplication and sharing in order to conserve agrobiodiversity.**

**With the help of the common bean, you can get involved in:**

- promoting genetic diversity of legumes in Europe
- disseminating scientific knowledge about genetic resources and food legumes
- developing a method and knowledge among citizens that could be applied to other crop genetic resources
- and establishing and testing a decentralised approach to genetic resources conservation, sharing and valorisation

**What you will do as part of the experiment:**

- receive a packet with a few different bean varieties
- plant and grow bean seeds according to given instructions

- nurture your beans, collect and record information about them using a dedicated and specially developed app
- suggest tips and best practices, e.g. as text, images and videos, that could help other participants via the dedicated app
- harvest the seeds and
- reproduce the seeds for the following years (we will distribute the seeds just once to each citizen but the citizen science initiative will run over four years). The seeds will then be multiplied by citizens that will keep the citizen science initiative running beyond the planned five years of INCREASE.
- offer the seeds for exchange to other citizens (using a protocol developed together with FAO)
- cook and taste them!
- send your assessment and recipes that will be included in “Thousands of traditional and innovative recipes to cook beans” published on the INCREASE website

### **Why would you take part?**

1. **To contribute to the collection of information through**
  - assessing the potential and the diversity of more than 1000 common bean local varieties sampled originally from farmers’ fields
  - measuring crop traits under local growing conditions showing the adaptation to different European environments and develop a photo gallery
  - providing your preferences for bean colours, shapes and taste
  - listing traditional and innovative cooking recipes and uses
  - submitting narrative text describing local tradition, historical facts related to common bean but also original stories related to or involving the common bean
  - using your own favourite common bean variety to be compared with those of the citizen science initiative and so contributing to the wider common bean databases
2. **To contribute to the use of information provided through**
  - exploring the huge resources developed with the help of all participants and compare different varieties including their DNA information that could help to reconstruct the history of dissemination of local varieties in Europe
  - exchanging information and practices with other participants from the whole of Europe
3. **To contribute to exchanging seeds with other participants (following all the requirements of the international treaty on biodiversity and genetic resources promoting the benefit sharing)**
4. **To contribute to developing new varieties by crossing and selecting specific variants**
5. **To ultimately contribute to improve biodiversity in Europe, and improve nutrition through healthy diets that include legumes.**