

## ASSESSMENT OF GENETIC DIVERSITY OF PHASEOLUS GERmplasm BY MORPHOLOGICAL QUANTITATIVE CHARACTERS

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### ABSTRACT

A study was carried out for the characterisation and pre-evaluation of genetic diversity present in the *Phaseolus* germplasm stored in Albanian Gene Bank and 50 local common bean accessions of different origins were involved to identify and select the most important accessions with favourable characteristics for use in breeding programs. The study was carried out at the Experimental Field of Agriculture University of Tirana during two subsequent growing seasons, 2017 and 2018. ANOVA analysis and Tukey-Kramer test found significant differences for most of the quantitative morphological characters. PCA results showed that the first three PCs contribute for a substantial proportion of total variation, 77.8%. The percentages of total variation accounted for by each of the first three PCs were 54.2%; 13.0% and 10.6%, respectively. PCA and ordination analysis identified the quantitative morphological characters with more significant contribution on respective PC1 and PC2 variances (PoL, SeL, SeY, PLH, PoW and SeW characters). Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and Dimensional Ordination method revealed considerable amount of diversity between common beans, identified the variances of the first three principal components (77.8%) and the proportion of the total variance each factor contributes for. Principal Component Analysis, in respect of genetic variability among 50 common bean accessions of different origin, divide these accessions into four groups. The amount of genetic variability found between common bean genotypes is enough for the selection of desirable characters valuable for common bean breeding programs and facilitates the maintenance of its germplasm in Gene Bank.

**Keywords:** Genetic diversity, Phaseolus germplasm, morphological characters

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Common beans are the main source of protein in human nutrition in many parts of the world. Thousands of legume species exist, but common beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.) are from far the most consumed. Common bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.) is a widely cultivated crop due to its good nutritional composition (high protein content in dry seed and a good source of fiber) besides its high market value. This vegetable is consumed either as a dry bean (pulse) or as fresh bean (fresh vegetable) and it is considered one of the most important grains for human alimentation. In some countries, beans are the primary source of protein in human diet.

Common bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.) originates in Latin America and was domesticated in Mexico more than 6000 years ago. It spread from Latin America to Europe, Africa and other parts of the world. It grows well in areas of medium rainfall from the tropics to the temperate regions. Genus *Phaseolus* counts a total of 56 species. All species of this genus are with  $2n = 22$  chromosomes, except for a single species which possesses  $2n = 20$  chromosomes.

The conservation, study and uses of local plant resources is a basic problem for breeding programs in many countries. During conservation of germplasm the seeds undergo quantitative and qualitative changes. For preserving genetic diversity, characterization of bean accessions allows the identification of genetic variability present on bean germplasm, as it helps describe the differences between accessions and address breeding programs (Gixhari *et. al.*, 2016). This is particularly crucial today, due to the increasing influence of different anthropogenic factors that can affect the genetic diversity of various valuable species (Krasteva *et. al.*, 2002).

In Albania, the bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) is one of the most important crops. Actually, over 90% of bean cultivation area is cultivated with native bean landraces (Canko *et. al.*, 2008). In Albania, beans germplasm represents the important genetic resources used directly by farmers and consumers.

The Albanian Gene Bank, part of the Agriculture University of Tirana, holds approximately 307 accessions of common bean germplasm. Common bean germplasm is composed especially by local genotypes or landraces. Landraces harbour amount of diversity that is of interest for future breeding work, as well as for developing new varieties and consequently need to be preserved for future generations (Negri and Tosti 2002; Stoilova *et. al.*, 2004; Stoilova *et. al.*, 2005). Despite its economic importance, bean germplasm has not been characterized very well genetically, and little is known about the nature of the variability of this germplasm. Therefore, the information about

extent of uses of various gene pools are extremely valuable for the rational planning of the use of bean germplasm in breeding programs (Gixhari *et al.*, 2016).

Traditionally, germplasm diversity is evaluated by morphological descriptors (Hobdari *et al.*, 2012; Gixhari *et al.*, 2016), which remain the only legitimate marker types accepted by the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV 1990; 2009). Characterization of germplasm collections, based on morphological and agronomic traits, is of high interest for breeding work (Stoilova 2007; Gixhari *et al.*, 2013; Hobdari and Gixhari 2017). In some cases, other traits important for producing typical and high-quality products are also taken in consideration (Pereira *et al.*, 2005; Stoilova 2007). Singh *et al.*, (1991a) and Gixhari *et al.*, (2014) suggested the combination of agro-morphological, biochemical and molecular data for diversity studies since this combination offers complementary results.

Albanian Gene Bank has carried out several studies using morphological and agronomic traits, during regeneration and characterization procedures (Hobdari *et al.*, 2012; 2017; Bode *et al.*, 2013; Gixhari *et al.*, 2013; Gixhari *et al.*, 2014), but bean germplasm stored in GenBank has still a considerable number of accessions that need to be analysed and characterized.

The present study aims to analyse the genetic diversity among fifty common bean accessions (genotypes) and the identification of the most important morphological characters for use in breeding programs of bean germplasm.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

*Plant material:* The analysis was performed on fifty common bean accessions (49 bean accessions stored in Gene Bank and one is local bean named “DIBRA” and the data are in Table 1 reported.

**Table 1.** Accessions of common bean germplasm stored in Gene Bank and included in the study

AGB1284	AGB1298	AGB1315	AGB1323	AGB1338	AGB1345	AGB1366
AGB1291	AGB1302	AGB1316	AGB1324	AGB1339	AGB1346	AGB1367
AGB1293	AGB1304	AGB1318	AGB1325	AGB1340	AGB1347	AGB1368
AGB1294	AGB1305	AGB1319	AGB1326	AGB1341	AGB1348	AGB1369
AGB1295	AGB1308	AGB1320	AGB1327	AGB1342	AGB1349	AGB1370
AGB1296	AGB1310	AGB1321	AGB1329	AGB1343	AGB1361	AGB1379
AGB1297	AGB1314	AGB1322	AGB1337	AGB1344	AGB1365	AGB1386

*Morphological characters:* Leaflet Length (LL), Plant Height (PLH) (cm), Pod Length (PoL), Pod Width (PoW), Number of Pod per Plant (PoPL),

Number of Seeds per Pod (SPo), Seed Length (SeL), Seed Width (SeW) and Seed Yield (SeY).

*The experimental site:* The study for the assessment of common bean accessions diversity was carried out at the experimental field of Agriculture University of Tirana (latitude: 402405N; longitude: 0194108E; elevation: 40m) during two subsequent growing seasons; 2017 and 2018.

*Field observations:* The measurements and field observations were carried out based on Gene Bank standards (FAO 2014), Recognized Reconstruction Guidelines (Salcedo 2008) and Descriptors (IBPGR 1982) for characterization and evaluation of genetic material.

*Cultural practices:* Sowing date and growing conditions as the distance between plants in a row and between rows, fertilizer application, number of plants established, plant protection, harvest date, etc. were the same for each bean accession and consistent with established farming practices of the area and with the variety used.

*Statistical Analysis:* The differences between common bean accessions and comparison for all the means of observed and evaluated characters were carried out using ANOVA analysis and Tukey-Kramer test. Principal Components Analysis (PCA) on correlation method was used to analyse relationships between bean genotypes and to identify the most important morphological characters that influence highly on the total variability. All statistic data were calculated employing the SAS JMP Statistical Discovery (2012), and a dendrogram (ward method) and two-dimensional relationship diagram (phaseolus genotypes x morphological characters) were carried out.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

*Analysis of morphological quantitative characters:* ANOVA analysis found the presence of significant differences between common bean accessions for the greatest number of morphological characters at the probability  $P_{0.05}$  and  $P_{0.01}$ . High degree of variation was observed for PLH, PoPL, PoL and especially for SeY characters. Low differences were found for PoW, SePo and SeW morphological characters (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Analysis of variance for all chamomile traits

Source of Variance. Traits	Sum of Squares (population) (df=49)	Sum of Squares (Error) (df= 50)	C. Total (df = 99)	Mean Square (population)	Mean Square (Error)	F' Ratio	Prob>F
LL	151.94392	3.78305	155.72697	3.10090	0.07566	40.9841	<.0001**
<b>PLH</b>	2622.6833	7.3854	2630.0687	53.5241	0.1477	362.3670	<.0001**
PoL	336.94194	5.07720	342.01914	6.87637	0.10154	67.7181	<.0001**
PoW	1.292301	0.22475	1.517051	0.026373	0.004495	5.8673	<.0001**
<b>PoPL</b>	2789.6720	8.2308	2797.9028	56.9321	0.1646	345.8490	<.0001**
SePo	26.402400	3.360000	29.762400	0.538824	0.067200	8.0182	<.0001**
SeL	211.43348	6.30185	217.73533	4.31497	0.12604	34.2357	<.0001**
SeW	33.178524	3.672700	36.851224	0.677113	0.073454	9.2182	<.0001**
<b>SeY</b>	9752489	1049258	10801747	199030	20985	9.4843	<.0001**

F ratio values significant at the P<sub>0.05</sub> level of the probability (\*) and P<sub>0.01</sub> level of the probability (\*\*)

**Principal Components Analysis:** Principal Components Analysis on correlations identified the variances of the principal components and the proportion of the total variance each factor contributes for. Eigenvalues and percent of variances each factor accounts for are in the Table 3 reported. According to the MINEIGEN criterion (Kaiser 1960) three principal components that account for 77. 8% of the total variation are retained for further analysis.

PCA results show that the major sources of variation in the total variance is given by the first two PCs. All quantitative variables contribute to 100% of total variation. The percentages of total variation accounted for by each of the first three PCs are 54.2%; 13.0% and 10.6%, respectively (Table 3). The first three PCs explain 77.8% of the original variation, and the variation >75% or near to 80.0% is acceptable for characterization and evaluation of plant collections in a Gene Bank (Cadima *et al.*, 2001; Jolliffe 2002).

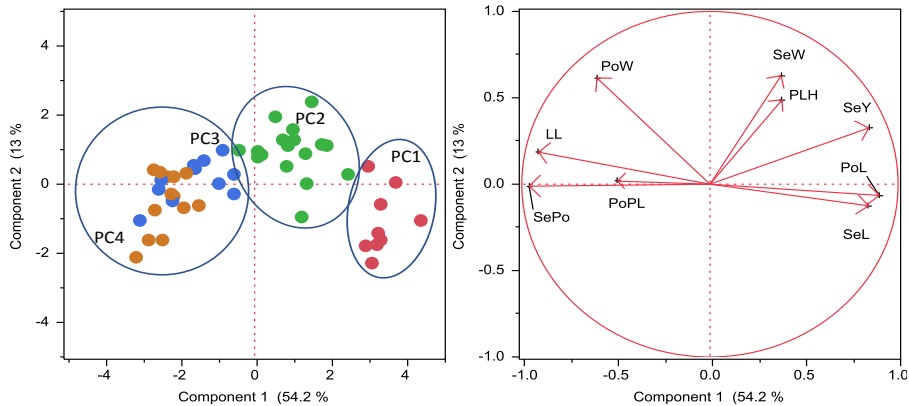
**Table 3.** Eigenvalues matrix of principal components (common bean genotypes x morphological characters)

Principal Components/factor analysis						
PC No.	Eigenvalue	Percent variance	Cumulative Percent	$\chi^2$	df	Prob. > $\chi^2$
<b>1</b>	<b>4.8785</b>	<b>54.205</b>	<b>54.205</b>	315.787	36.304	<.0001*
<b>2</b>	<b>1.1710</b>	<b>13.012</b>	<b>67.217</b>	141.925	35.409	<.0001*
<b>3</b>	<b>0.9548</b>	<b>10.608</b>	<b>77.825</b>	113.664	28.468	<.0001*
4	0.7731	8.590	86.415	85.332	22.033	<.0001*

$\chi^2$  – Chi Square, df– degree of freedom; Prob. – probability; \*significance level equal to the 0.05 of probability

Complete information was received applying ordination analysis method (Jolliffe 2002). Dimensional scaling of relationships (common bean

genotypes x morphological characters) that contributes for the larger proportion of the total variance in PC1, PC2 and PC3 revealed by PCA showed that the contribution of each bean genotypes and of each quantitative morphological character was found in equal on the total of variation.



**Fig. 1:** Relationships among common bean genotypes based on morphological characters revealed by PCA.

PC analysis found 9 and 17 common bean accessions included in PC1 and PC2 that contribute for 67.2% of total variation, and contribution for 19.2% on the total variation was attribute of 24 bean accessions included in PC3 and PC4 (Table 3; Figure 1).

For PC1 (with 54.2% contribute on the total variation) characters as PoL, SeL and SeY were the most important source for the variation of PC1 (Figure 1). Two morphological characters as LL and SePo showed important **negative influence** on the PC1 variance (Table 4, Figure 1).

Variation in PC2 (13.0% of total variation) was mainly the result of differences in PLH, PoW, SeW and SeY morphological characters. SeY characters contributes the part of variation not expressed on PC1 (Table 4, Figure 1).

For PC3 (with only 10.6% contribute on the total variation) characters as PLH and PoPL were the most important source for the variation on the PC3 variance. PLH character contributes the part of variation not expressed on PC1 and PC2 and SeW showed important **negative influence** on the PC3 variance (Table 4, Figure 1).

**Table 4.** Matrix of vectors of three PC for common bean genotypes x morphological characters

No	Quantitative morphological characters		PC1	PC2	PC3
1	Leaflet Length	LL	<b>-0.41268</b>	0.17135	-0.05907
2	Plant height	PLH	0.17348	<b>0.45097</b>	<b>0.64573</b>
3	Pod Length	PoL	<b>0.40725</b>	-0.06017	0.09272
4	Pod Width	PoW	-0.27196	<b>0.56788</b>	0.00802
5	Pods per Plant	PoPL	-0.22226	0.01640	<b>0.51430</b>
6	Seeds per Pod	SePo	<b>-0.43501</b>	-0.01069	-0.00608
7	Seed Length	SeL	<b>0.38151</b>	-0.11562	-0.00501
8	Seed Width	SeW	0.17122	<b>0.58029</b>	<b>-0.54582</b>
9	Seed Yield	SeY	<b>0.38247</b>	<b>0.30111</b>	0.09165

In bold all eigenvectors > 0.30

The data about genetic relationships between bean genotypes and the most important morphological characters provides better understanding of germplasm sampling. Separation of common bean accessions (genotypes) into four different PCs, and where the division among bean genotypes included on the PC1 and PC2 was very clear, is useful for the choice of parents for further crosses in breeding programs. This is not simple for the bean genotypes of PC3 and PC4 that both have similar most of the morphological characteristics.

The study identified the morphological characters with more significant weighting on respective PC1 and PC2 variances (PoL, SeL, SeY, PLH, PoW and SeW characters), which can be used successfully as morphological quantitative markers for evaluation and characterization of the bean germplasm.

The amount of genetic variability found in this study is available to the breeders for selection of desirable characters. This variability is a valuable source for creation of new gene combinations in bean breeding programs.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The field trials carried out in the present study helped characterize for the first time fifty common bean genotypes and identify the most important morphological diversity within and between bean genotypes, very useful for bean breeding programs.

PCA results showed that the first three PCs contribute for a substantial proportion of total variation, 77.8%.

The percentages of total variation accounted for by each of the first three PCs were 54.2%; 13.0% and 10.6% respectively.

PCA and ordination analysis identified the quantitative morphological characters with more significant contribution on respective PC1 and PC2 variances (PoL, SeL, SeY, PLH, PoW and SeW characters), which can be used successfully as morphological quantitative markers for evaluation and characterization of the bean germplasm.

The amount of genetic variability found between bean genotypes is sufficient for selection of desirable characters and for creation of new gene combinations to sustain common bean breeding programs.

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