



## Highlights

International Conference on Mediterranean Countries and EU Opportunities

Workshop on IUCN Red Listing of Threatened Plant Species

Cryopreservation Project Initiated at the RBG

BOT-ERA Attends MIRA Conference in Morocco

BOT-ERA Participates in Scientific Day at NCARE

Specimen and Seed Collecting Trip

Plant Collecting and Conservation Workshop

Consortium Meeting in Luxembourg



Co-funded by the European Union

## Dear Readers,

This is the second newsletter of BOT-ERA, a collaborative project funded under the FP7 Framework Programme of the European Commission. The project aims to reinforce cooperation between the Royal Botanic Garden (RBG) of Jordan and the following European organisations in the field of botanical research:

- Royal Botanic Gardens, KEW (UK)
- University of Birmingham (UK)
- Innoveo Consulting (Luxembourg)

In the last several months the BOT-ERA team undertook the following key tasks:

- Organization and participation in workshops and conferences: representatives of the BOT-ERA project attended three international conferences in Jordan and Morocco. Two workshops on IUCN Red Listing of Threatened Plant Species and Plant Collecting and Conservation were organized in Amman. Furthermore, two members of the BOT-ERA team attended the workshop "Get Ready for Horizon 2020."
- Development of twinning partnerships: a specimen and seed collecting trip was organized jointly by RBG Jordan and RBG KEW, in cooperation with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature.
- Enhancement of the RBG's scientific knowledge: Dr. Florent Englemann (*Institut de recherche pour le développement, France*) provided a training session on cryopreservation techniques for long-term conservation of plant genetic resources.
- The 4th BOT-ERA consortium meeting in Luxembourg

In this newsletter you will find an overview of the events and activities that have been carried out within the framework of BOT-ERA project since September 2012.

## Announcement

In July 2013 we reached the halfway point of the BOT-ERA project, and the partners have already achieved significant results. However, a number of activities are still planned and will be carried out during the second half of the project:

- Updating the checklist of flora of Jordan (by the end of 2013)
- MSB training, to be conducted in the next few months
- Training in seed collection and conservation
- Training in access and benefit sharing
- A workshop on Horizon 2020 training, coming up in December
- BOT-ERA Conference, to take place in April 2014.

## Beyond BOT-ERA

Recently, representatives of the BOT-ERA project had an opportunity to discuss the post-project research strategy with Wayne Neale, an Institutional Advancement Specialist from the United States, who consulted with the Royal Botanic Garden of Jordan in May and June, 2013.

The discussions were focused on formulating options and leveraging our outcomes to ensure the sustainability of BOT-ERA's programmes before the FP7 funding comes to an end in 2015. We also discussed the importance of pre-planning for final reporting, and the advance preparation needed to apply for the EU's Horizon 2020 programme in 2014.

## Consortium

Coordinator



الحديقة النباتية الملكية  
Royal Botanic Garden

[www.royalbotanicgarden.org](http://www.royalbotanicgarden.org)

Kew

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS  
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Partners

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## BOT-ERA's contribution to RBG capacity building

Since the launch of the BOT-ERA project in February 2012, significant results have been achieved. Many joint activities are being held as part of the twinning partnership between RBG of Jordan and RBG KEW.

During the first period of the project, a number of tasks were completed. In particular, a tailored training was provided to the RBG staff in order to increase their knowledge in the field of cryopreservation of plants, one of the EC research priorities.

Furthermore, some promotional activities were carried out. Two representatives introduced BOT-ERA at the "Get Ready for Horizon 2020" workshop in order to raise awareness about the project and other RBG programmes.

At the moment, seven out of 13 tasks in the project have been accomplished.

### BOT-ERA's research topics:

#### Research Topic A: Plants and Seed Conservation

- A1 Species Prioritisation
- A2 Eco-geography
- A3 Seed Collection and Seed Processing

#### Research Topic B: Genetic Diversity and Biotechnology

- B1 Genetic Analysis
- B2 Eco and Biodiversity Assessment
- B3 Cryopreservation

#### Research Topic C: Utilization and Access Benefit Sharing

- C1 Access and Benefit Sharing
- C2 Conservation

## History of the Project since September 2012

### BOT-ERA took part in the International Conference on Mediterranean Countries and EU Opportunities October 22-23, 2012

The Conference aimed at developing synergies between different projects co-funded by the European Commission within the FP7 Capacities Programme, to enable Mediterranean Partner Countries to advocate EU strategies and initiatives for the period of 2012-2020.

Among the Conference attendees were project coordinators from a number of countries, policymakers, academics, researchers, industry representatives, European Community officials and also the RBG's Research Manager, Communications Manager, Dr. S. Saifan presented the BOT-ERA project.

The main objectives were to spur partnerships, coordinate research, promote networking, share knowledge and best practices in EU projects management, as well as to encourage the establishment of national and regional joint centres for technology innovation.



### Workshop on IUCN Red Listing of Threatened Plant Species Amman, Jordan - November 25-28, 2012

As a part of the BOT-ERA project, a four-day Red Listing training workshop was held at the Amman International Hotel.

After initial training, participants made assessments for plant species in Jordan and seven species were completed by the end of the workshop.

These assessments are a direct contribution to the National Red List of Jordan project and serve as a basis for the future work.

Participants from the RBG of Jordan, NCARE, RSCN, University of Birmingham, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Environment received training on Red List categories, criteria and their application at the regional level.







## Cryopreservation Project Initiated at the RBG Amman and Tell Ar-Rumman, Jordan – January 12-18, 2013



Dr. Florent Englemann, Consultant in Biotechnology from the *Institut de Recherche pour le Développement* in Montpellier, France, met RBG and BOT-ERA representatives in order to provide tailored training in cryopreservation techniques for long-term conservation of plant genetic resources.

During the training, the role of cryopreservation in the context of the establishment of germplasm collections within the RBG was discussed.



Dr. Englemann visited the Hamdi Mango Centre for Scientific Research. He also spent a day touring the RBG site in Tell Ar-Rumman and saw the herbarium, the presentation of the National Virtual Herbarium, the seed gene bank and the plant nursery.

A further day of meetings was organized at the RBG office in order to select the plant species to be used for *in vitro* conservation and cryopreservation experiments.

Dr. Englemann had the opportunity to meet HRH Princess Basma bint Ali, founder of the RBG, and briefed her on the content and outcomes of the visit.

[More information on the visit](#)

## BOT-ERA attends MIRA conference in Morocco Marrakesh, Morocco – January 23-25, 2013



During the MIRA conference, presentations were made on the development, results, impact and conclusions of the MIRA INCO-NET project for the Mediterranean area, as well as the way forward after project completion. It was an opportunity to discuss MIRA's achievements, offer an exchange of experience, transition to the next "MED SPRING" phase, and discuss prospects for Euro-Mediterranean STI cooperation within the framework of "Horizon 2020."

Tariq Abu Taleb (Executive Director of the RBG) and Dr. Sobhia Saifan (BOT-ERA coordinator) presented the BOT-ERA project, and its plant conservation and biodiversity activities.

Poster sessions sparked discussions on the development of major international research and innovation projects in the Euro-Med area. In addition, a number of side meetings with FP7 stakeholders were held in order to build networks with current project representatives and discuss new calls.

[More information on the MIRA project](#)

## BOT-ERA Participates in Scientific Day at NCARE Amman, Jordan – March 12, 2013

The BOT-ERA Project took part in a scientific day focusing on "Intellectual Property in Agriculture" at the National Center for Agricultural Research and Extension (NCARE) in Amman.

Dr. Sabah Saifan, BOT-ERA Project Coordinator, gave a presentation entitled "Implementation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) through Utilization of the Standard Material Transfer Agreement."

This subject is relevant to BOT-ERA's research topic C, namely Utilization and Access Benefit Sharing.

The lecture examined the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its relation to ITPGRFA, with a particular focus on access and benefit sharing, multilateral systems, and the Standard Material Transfer Agreement.



[Presentation \(full version\)](#)

## Specimen and Seed Collecting Trip Jordan, April 5-14, 2013

The participants of the BOT-ERA project went on a seed collecting trip in several wildlife reserves of Jordan. The trip was organized by RBG Kew and RBG Jordan, in cooperation with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature.

The aim of the trip was to collect specimens and seeds of native plants in some of the most diverse nature areas of Jordan. Specific training was given in collection techniques and the preservation of seeds and specimens in the field.

This collecting trip partly fulfilled the following BOT-ERA tasks: prepare an up-to-date checklist of the Flora of Jordan, prepare up-to-date plant lists for the nature reserves and conservation areas in Jordan, and provide field training in seed collection and conservation.

Specimens of more than 120 plant species were collected from different ecological habitats. The top set was given to RBG Jordan, and duplicates were sent to the RSCN and RBG Kew. Part of the collection was transported to the UK for identification at Kew.







## Plant Collecting and Conservation Workshop Royal Botanic Garden, Jordan – April 11, 2013

A one-day workshop “Toward Effective Collection and Conservation of Wild Plants” was organized within the framework of the BOT-ERA project at the RBG site in Tell Ar-Rumman, Jordan.

The aim of the workshop was to reinforce essential information and training for seed and plant specimen collecting, preservation and *ex situ* conservation, for high quality collections. Training materials were provided by Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Fifteen participants attended the workshop.

Dr. Sabah Saifan (BOT-ERA Coordinator) illustrated the BOT-ERA’s role in plant conservation. Dr. Shahina Ghazanfar (Kew) talked about effective collection of plants specimens for herbaria. Emma Williams (Kew) presented a course of action for seed collection, drying, handling and conservation. Joanna Osborne (Kew) spoke about preparing herbarium specimens for conservation and how to collect plant DNA samples for analysis.



## Getting Ready for Horizon 2020 Amman, Jordan – April 16, 2013

BOT-ERA Coordinator Dr Sabah Saifan and RBG Communications Manager Habiba Dingwall attended the workshop “Get Ready for Horizon 2020” organized by the Jordan Europe-Wide Enhanced Research Links in ICT (JEWEL) project, within the FP7 INCO ERA-WIDE programme.

The presentations were focused on developing links between Europe and the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and grant opportunities under the EU’s Horizon 2020 programme, starting in 2014, for collaborative projects involving Mediterranean countries.

A BOT-ERA booth was set up in the exhibition and poster area to provide info about project activities as well as the RBG’s other programmes. The event facilitated networking with the coordinators of other FP7 projects, namely JOCHERA, JEWEL, IJERA and KHCCBIO.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Consortium meeting Luxembourg, June 20-22, 2013

Recently the 4<sup>th</sup> Consortium meeting took place in Luxembourg. The representatives from INNOVEO, RBG Jordan, RGB Kew and the University of Birmingham discussed a number of important topics, such as progress on tasks, deliverables to be completed in the second period of the project, checklist of the flora of Jordan, seed and species collection, and seed cryopreservation.

Dr. Shahina Ghazanfar presented a progress report. Particularly, she talked about trainings and collecting trips that had been done so far. She also recommended that RBG Jordan establish DNA bank.

Ditta Bezdán (Innoveo) delivered a presentation and initiated discussion regarding a proposed RBG evaluation methodology. Giles Brandon (Innoveo) detailed the importance of the Marie Curie programme for Jordanian scientists.

HRH Princess Basma bint Ali, founder of the RBG, also took an active part in discussions.

After the meeting the attendees participated in a guided tour of the gardens of Ansembourg Castle where they had an opportunity to explore the flora of Luxembourg.

## Contact Information

For more information about the BOT-ERA project, do not hesitate to contact:

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For updates on BOT-ERA news and events, we encourage you to regularly visit our website:

[www.boterajordan.org](http://www.boterajordan.org)



- [Preparing a seed collecting trip](#)
- [Assessing a potential collection](#)
- [Collecting seed herb and data](#)

