

Mediterranean Science, Policy, Research & Innovation Gateway

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The Mediterranean Science, Policy, Research and Innovation Gateway (MED-SPRING) is a Coordination Action financed by the INCO-Net instrument under the FP7 - Capacities Programme. The aim of the Project is to contribute to the quality of the Euro-Mediterranean research area, with a particular focus on the bi-regional Euro-Mediterranean S&T cooperation, research and innovation, policy dialogue and cooperation monitoring.

Welcome to the 15th MED-SPRING E-Newsletter!

Dear readers, welcome to the fifteenth issue of the MED-SPRING E-Newsletter, which has the purpose of informing about our activities and involving researchers, stakeholders, policy makers and governmental officers in a renewed strategy for the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, with a particular focus on the Euro-Mediterranean Science and Technology Cooperation.

KEEP AN EYE ON: **AGORA MED-SPRING**

Our recent activities

- **MED-SPRING 1st Euro-MedHackathon: Eco-Efficiency in the Agro-Food Chain**

The “1st Euro-Med Hackathon: Eco-Efficiency in the Agro-Food Chain” took place in Amman (Jordan) from 14th to 15th December 2016. The 2-day event was organized by MedSpring and STRD-II projects and was hosted by HCST, in collaboration with STRD-II programme, MH-ESR, and CIHEAM-IAMB.

The private sector was represented by four Italian companies, Barilla, Seeds&Chips, Torino Wireless and SPRING invited to shortlist the 30 ideas participating in the Hackathon. They also offered their sponsorship for the awards to the final three winners. More than

40 participants including young innovators, researchers, and entrepreneurs, from 10 Euro-Mediterranean Countries gathered at the event venue, and worked in a collaborative and participative way towards its success.



Our coming activities

- **MED-SPRING Final Conference**

MED-SPRING organizes on July 6th and 7th a two-days event, hosted by the European Commission. The

“Annual Meeting of the General Assembly” will be held on July 6th, while the Final Conference “The MedSpring legacy for Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation on R&I”, will be held on July 7th. The venue is at the A. Borschette Congress Center (CCAB) - European Commission - Rue Froissart 36, in Brussels (Belgium).

Also in the pipeline!

- **ERANETMED Third Call Pre-Announcement**

This is a pre-announcement of the third joint transnational research call that will be co-funded by the following ERANETMED partners: ANR (France), ASRT (Egypt), BMBF (Germany), CIHEAM Bari (Int. Org.), CNRS-L (Lebanon), DGRSDT (Algeria), HCST (Jordan), MESRSFC (Morocco), MESRST (Tunisia), MIUR (Italy), MINECO (Spain), RPF (Cyprus), STDF (Egypt), TUBITAK (Turkey).



It aims at informing research teams about the imminent publication of the joint transnational research call in May 2017.

- **MED-SPRING will participate in the Seeds&Chips Global Food Innovation Summit**

The MED-SPRING project will participate in the “Seeds&Chips Global Food Innovation Summit”, to be held from 8 to 11 May ,2017 in Milan, Italy. This is one of the top food innovation events worldwide. It’s dedicated to showcasing national and international talent and cutting-edge solutions from around the world.



- **COST Connect: Water for Food and Agriculture in the Mediterranean Area**

Water for food and agriculture is an important topic on the agenda. COST supports more than 20 Actions in this area and European stakeholders intensively discuss the issue with a strong focus on the Mediterranean area. COST aims to provide networking opportunities to structure this important field, to link the active researchers with policy stakeholders and thus connect the dots in the European Research Area.



- **1st Euro-Mediterranean Conference for Environmental Integration**

The conference aims to gather new research contributions from all disciplines of environmental sciences by many Euro-Mediterranean scientists from diverse backgrounds, in particular from the geo- and bio-environmental sciences and engineering, and thus make an essential contribution towards ensuring that science and knowledge can contribute to promoting a more sustainable environment for the Euro-Mediterranean region.



Meet our Partners! Institut de Recherche pour le Developpement

The “Institut de Recherche pour le Developpement” (IRD) is a public research institute under the joint authority of the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International

Development, dedicated to basic research, on subjects related to sustainable development. It develops both local capabilities and collaborative projects that aim at finding solutions adapted to the human and planetary challenges: pandemics, climate change, humanitarian and political crises, etc. This inter-disciplinary institute is also one of the main operators of French research policy on topics relating in priority to regions and countries in the inter-tropical regions and the Mediterranean area. IRD is quite unique in its mode of functioning, since it conducts research within negotiated partnerships with research units and research partners in developing countries on health, environmental sciences, climate sciences, geology and geophysics, biological sciences, modelisation and computer sciences, and a large range of social sciences. Strategic partnerships with research teams from the Global South are the main tool of action of IRD. IRD is unique in the fact that it is the only research institute in the World that has the possibility to send its own researchers or engineers (820 researchers and 1228 IRD engineers and technicians) overseas for long periods (usually two to four years); 35% of the research personnel is based overseas in this way; it has also the legal capacity to engage in direct negotiations with national and international authorities for the definition of long-term research programmes.



Moreover, IRD respects the freedom of researchers in deciding their research topics, methods and temporality and are evaluated by multi-disciplinary scientific committees with internal as well as external and foreign scientists. IRD - formerly known as ORSTOM - has a very long historical trajectory since the second world war and until very recently most of its production is open access and the Institute manages one of the largest scientific documentations databases (horizon.documentation.ird.fr)

and, among other things, one of the largest collection of maps of Africa.

IRD manages its own collections of books and a strong film unit. It has also very exceptional competences in expertise and participate in international regulations such as, for example, disease control in tropical areas, control of fishing quotas, surveillance of biodiversity, control and water management, environmental observatories, observatories on violence, research on education and knowledge and so on. Among its 56 units, IRD has a strong social science component (around one third of its researchers). Thus, IRD has been one of the largest anthropology hubs in Europe for Africa. Since this year (2017) IRD has a new strategic plan that mentions clearly all these principles: developing equitable scientific partnerships and co-publications with developing countries (around 4000 publications and co-publications per year); propose public policies informed by scientific research; place citizens and local knowledge as drivers of change and promote responsible innovation; finally develop an internationally recognized scientific expertise and know-how.

Read more: <https://en.ird.fr/>.

Focus on the latest news on Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation

During the period 2014 to 2017 the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation has received a great impulse thanks to the overcome of the procedural obstacles related to the approval of the PRIMA initiative. The CoP Conference in Paris and Marrakech are milestones in the definition of the common interest of all Mediterranean Countries regarding the challenges posted by the climate change. The political frame of dialogue represented by the GSO and the 5+5 Dialogue Platform have highlighted the importance of dealing with sustainable water, farming and food systems for local and regional development through innovative solutions, together with the urgent need to improve the human capital and the training of innovation experts.

PRIMA is built around a common Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA), which has been drafted by the SSA 4PRIMA (H2020 Project 724060 by European Commission) and will be the basis of its Work Plans and its Calls, foreseen to start early 2018. With a budget of 400 Million Euros over 10 years, PRIMA is expected to boost local businesses and investment opportunities, addressing also unemployment and migration issues in the region and becoming a further vehicle of sustainable growth. In the SRIA it clearly emerges that PRIMA's aim is to promote excellent research, to define solutions supporting communities, consumers and enterprises able to deal with challenges in the water and agro-food sectors, and to build cooperation among researchers and innovators. PRIMA would like to contribute to the creation of bridges between the two shores of the Mediterranean. The SRIA is

presented in May 2017 on the occasion of the Malta Euro-Mediterranean Conference, attended by political representatives of Participating States, experts and stakeholder of the whole Region. This important opportunity highlights the value of PRIMA also in terms of scientific diplomacy. PRIMA will develop 3 Thematic Areas and the crosscutting nexus among the three main areas of research and innovation: MANAGEMENT OF WATER, FARMING SYSTEMS and AGRO-FOOD VALUE CHAIN.

The World Economic Forum Global Risks 2017 Analysis Report Identified the following 5 Top Trends that Determine Global Developments: Rising Income and wealth disparity, Changing climate, Increasing polarization of societies, Rising cyber dependency and Ageing population. This analysis, complement and develop some of the Global Risks reported in the 2016 Report and their impact affecting the Mediterranean Area such as involuntary migration and social instability. Some geopolitical risks - such as the failure of national governance - are considered to be among the top three most likely risks in the Middle East and North Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, and Central Asia. Also prominent in the Global Risks Landscape 2016 are environmental risks such as failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation, which is considered the most potentially impactful risk and the third most likely, with water crises, biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse rising up the list of concerns. Environmental worries have been at the forefront in recent years, reflecting a sense that climate change - related risks have moved from hypothetical to certain because insufficient action has been undertaken to address them. The Risk that has registered the highest increases in perceptions of likelihood and impact is large-scale involuntary migration, now rated as the most likely and fourth most impactful.

Climate change and water risks are intricately linked to food security concerns. Agricultural production will have to increase in the coming decades to feed a growing population and a rising demand for meat. Unless current water management practices change significantly, many parts of the world will therefore face growing competition for water between agriculture, energy, industry, and cities. OECD estimates that 4 billion people could be living in water scarce areas by 2050. According to the World Water Council, 80% to 90% of the scarce water in many of the world's arid and semi-arid river basins is already being used, and over 70% of the world's major rivers no longer reach the sea. Even many developed countries are failing to proactively address water vulnerabilities, instead reacting only after extreme weather events. In developing countries, the political challenges inherent in water infrastructure and conservation projects are exacerbated by greater financing challenges.

Another important political event was the acknowledgement by the 29th Ministerial Session of the UN Economic and Social Council of Western Asia held in Doha, Qatar, the 16 December 2016, where the ministerial panel discussion on the Sustainable development Goals (SDG) observed that the Arab region needs to build the capacity of its national statistical offices (NSOs) to collect data to monitor progress and, among other objectives, adapt the SDG to national context or develop a regional action on science, technology and innovation. The landscape described by the WEF Reports represents a real challenge for countries around the Mediterranean and their scientific and technological communities, and is a real incentive to deepen in the collaborative frames already existing and support the cooperation policies based in the common interest.

Read more: <http://www.medspring.eu/wp3-deliverables>.

Colophon: This E-Newsletter has been developed within the framework of the MED-SPRING Project (FP7-INCO.Net 311780). For further information about the project please visit the official website: <http://www.medspring.eu>. Edited/Written by MED-SPRING WP3 Team and MED-SPRING Coordination team. Images by MED-SPRING, ERANETMED, IRD, Seeds and Chips and COST.