

BioNET-NAFRINET LOOP Coordinating Committee Meeting

Institut National Agronomique de Tunis

Tunis, Tunisia, 24-25 April 2010

Report

By

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BioNET-NAFRINET Network Coordinator



Participants to Tunis LCC Meeting (Tunis, 24-25 April, 2010)

From left to right:

(back line) Dr. Louis Boumans (Nederland), Pr. Mohamed Fennane (Morocco), Mr. Saleh M. Amnissi (Libya), Mr. Ahmed Ould Abdel Vettah (Mauritania), Dr. Mohamed Ammar (Tun)

(front line) Pr. Mohamed Elyes Kchouk (Tun), Pr. Abdellatif Boudabbous (Tun), Pr. Naima barbouche (Tun), Pr. Saida Tekaya (Tun), Pr. Meriem Kaid Harche (Algeria), Pr. Faouzia Charfi-Cheikhrouha (Tun), Pr. Ons Daly Yahia-Kefi (Tun), Dr. Wanja Kinuthia (Kenya), Dr. Taher Issa (Egypt), Dr. John Mauremooto (UK), Pr. Nejib Daly Yahia (Tun)

Ikons: Upper: Dr. Zeineb Ghrabi (Tun), Middle: Dr. Abderrazzak Smaoui (Tun), Lower: Dr. Gianniantonio Domina (Italy).

Background: Administrative offices of the Institut National Agronomique de Tunis.

Contents

BIONET-NAFRINET LOOP COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING.....	1
INSTITUT NATIONAL AGRONOMIQUE DE TUNIS	1
TUNIS, TUNISIA, 24-25 APRIL 2010	1
ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS	3
INTRODUCTION	4
<i>Background</i>	4
<i>Objective(s) and Justification</i>	4
<i>Duration and Timing</i>	4
<i>Required Outputs</i>	4
<i>Partnership, Monitoring / Progress Control</i>	4
MAIN WORKSHOP OBSERVATIONS & FINDINGS	5
RECOMMENDATIONS/LESSONS LEARNED	5
APPENDICES.....	6
WORKSHOP AGENDA (DRAFT)	7
BIONET-NAFRINET PRIORITIES	9
PARTICIPANTS LIST	15
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	17

Acronyms & Abbreviations

ATUTAX	Association Tunisienne de Taxonomie
BioNET	BioNET-International, The Global network of Taxonomy, www.bionet-intl.org
BNG	Banque Nationale de Gènes
CBBC	Centre of Biotechnology of Borj Cedria
CBD	International Convention on Biological Diversity www.cbd.int
COP/MOP	Conference of Parties/Meeting of Parties
EAFRINET	BioNET-EAFRINET, The East African Network of Taxonomy of BioNET-International
FSB	Faculté des Sciences de Bizerte
FST	Faculté des Sciences de Tunis
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GTI	Global Taxonomic Initiative
INAT	Institut National Agronomique de Tunis
IYB	International Year of Biodiversity 2010
LCC	LOOP Coordinating Committee
LOOP	Locally Owned and Operated Partnership
NACI	National Coordinating Institute
NAFRINET	BioNET-NAFRINET, The North African Network of Taxonomy of BioNET-International, www.bionet-nafrinet.net
NECI	Network Coordinating Institute of the LOOP
NFP	National Focal Point
NI	National Institute
SCBD	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program

Introduction

Background

BioNET-NAFRINET (www.bionet-nafrinet.net)

The North African Network of Taxonomy is a LOOP (Locally Owned and Operated Partnership) of BioNET-International (www.bionet-intl.org) established in 2003 upon a proposal made to governments of the region.

Objectives of BioNET-NAFRINET

To establish and support within the north-African subregion a realistic autonomy, in infrastructures, human resources and taxonomical services in response to a request from countries at the 6th Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to overcome the « **Taxonomic Impediment**» (CBD Decision VI/8). In particular:

1. To enable the achievement of national and subregional objectives in the development of sustainable management of all biological resources and ecological systems
2. To strengthen existing centres of expertise and establish new facilities, capabilities and resources so as to provide the region with the appropriate infrastructure and cadre of taxonomists needed to ensure self-sufficiency and self-reliance in taxonomy.
3. To conduct training, rehabilitate collections and develop and maintain records, develop user-friendly aids for identification, and transfer information and technology under donor supported institutional strengthening and capacity-building programmes.
4. To assist North African countries to meet their commitments to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and other relevant international conventions, protocols and initiatives, particularly the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Barcelona Convention, CITES, RAMSAR and Agenda 21.
5. To provide individual member governments, international organisations, NGOs, IGOs and donors, with a taxonomic structure and focal points within the sub-region and each country in order to facilitate economies of scale, and provision of the best possible advice on taxonomic matters, and the best possible taxonomic services in support of their programmes

Partnership

Potential to develop taxonomic capacities in the region. Potential partners: Euro+Med Plant Base, IUCN, OPTIMA, DIVERSITAS, MEDUSA, etc.

Objective(s) and Justification

Objectives:

1. Needs assessment and diagnosis for the North African region/countries
2. Draft a project prospectus for the North African region
3. Report activities of NACIs
4. Propose a Working Program for 2010-2013
5. Designate the NECI for 2010-2013

Duration and Timing

2 days (Saturday 24 – Sunday 25 April, 2010)

- 24/4/2010: Workshop on needs assessment and program of work
- 25/4/2010: national presentations, designation of NECI

Required Outputs

Expected outputs:

- Working Program for 2010-2013
- A common concept note for a regional project

Partnership, Monitoring / Progress Control

- NECI Coordinator:
 - Pr. Mohamed Elyes Kchouk (Tunisia)
- NACI coordinators:
 - Algeria: Pr Meriem Kaid Harche; Mauritania : Mr. Ahmed Ould Abdel Vettah ; Morocco: Pr Mohamed Fennane; Tunisia: Pr Naima Barbouche ;

- CBD/GTI national Focal Points:
 - Mauritania: Mr Ahmed Ould Abdel Vettah; Libya: Mr Saleh M. Amnissi; Egypt: Dr Taher Issa;
- Invited guests:
 - Dr Louis Boumans (Nederland), Dr Giannantonio Domina (Italy), Dr Wanja Kinuthia (Kenya)
- ATUTAX Bureau: Président : Mohamed Elyes KCHOUK ; Vice Président : Faouzia CHARFI – CHEIKHROUHA ; Secrétaire Général : Mohamed Nejib DALY YAHIA ; Secrétaire Général Adjoint : Ons KEFI-DALY YAHIA ; Trésorier : Naima BARBOUCHE ; Trésorier Adjoint : Mohamed AMMAR ; Membres : Abdellatif CHIHAI ; Saida TEKAYA ; Abderrazzak SMAOUI ; Zeineb GHRABI –GAMMAR.
- Workshop evaluators: BioNET-International (Dr John Mauremooto).

Main workshop observations & findings

- LCC meeting has been scheduled after an International Conference on “Taxonomy and Biodiversity” organized by the ATUTAX, the Tunisian Association of Taxonomy;
 - All LCC Participants were also invited to the 1st ATUTAX International Conference
- Were not able to attend:
 - CBD/GTI NFPs from Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia were not able to attend the LCC meeting; however:
 - Egypt was represented by Dr. Taher Issa from the Egypt Environment Agency;
 - Libya was represented by Mr Saleh Mohamed Amnissi;
 - Mauritania was represented by Mr Ahmed Ould Abdel Vettah;
 - Tunisian CBD NFP, Mr Nabil Hamada, presented Tunisian situation at the ATUTAX Conference;
 - Pr Eckhard von Raab-Straube (Euro+Med PlantBase, Germany) was not able to attend due to air traffic problems in North Europe and USA;
 - Pr Mohamed Neffati (IRA, Medenine) was not able to attend;
- Mauritania endorsed BioNET-NAFRINET on April 7th, 2010; country members of BioNET-NAFRINET are now five/six: Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia;
- Libya may soon endorse BioNET-NAFRINET;
- Upon approval from LCC Committee members, the CBBC, Tunisia, renewed its three years mandate to be the NECI for BioNET-NAFRINET; Prof. Mohamed Elyes Kchouk is the Regional Coordinator for BioNET-NAFRINET for the period 2010-2013;
- The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific research and the CBBC will give logistical support to BioNET-NAFRINET;
- ATUTAX bureau was invited to participate to the LCC Meeting together with guests from EAFRINET, Dr. Wanja Kinuthia, EAFRINET coordinator, European Universities and Museums, Dr. Giannantonio Domina, Dr. Louis Boumans, and BioNET-International, Dr. John Mauremooto;
- The participation of resource persons from other regions and other biocons helped to draft the priorities for BioNET-NAFRINET for the next three years term;

Recommendations/Lessons Learned

- The organization of LCC Meeting back to back to ATUTAX International Conference was beneficial for the Network in the sense that ATUTAX bureau helped draft priorities and activities of BioNET-NAFRINET for the next three years term 2010-2013;
- ATUTAX might be the “right arm” of BioNET-NAFRINET; similar national scientific associations might be encouraged in order to help BioNET-NAFRINET at the national level;
- A monitoring agenda should be established by the NECI in order to follow up the drafted priorities and activities to be run next three years term.

APPENDICES

Workshop Agenda (Draft)

(Agenda modified by LCC Committee)

Saturday 24-Apr-2010		
DAY 1		
Agenda Item	Principal Resource Persons	
	Facilitator Pr Mohamed Elyes Kchouk	
09:00	Opening of LCC Meeting & Welcome remarks	
	BioNET-NAFRINET	Pr Mohamed Elyes Kchouk
	INAT	Pr Elyes Hamza, Director INAT
	BioNET-International	Dr. John Mauremooto
09:30	Introduction of participants	All
09:45	Selection of LCC Chair	LCC
	Acceptance remarks by LCC Chair	LCC Chair
10:00	Adoption of Meeting Agenda	LCC
10 :00-10 :30	BioNET Global Program	Dr. John Mauremooto, BioNET-International
10:30-11 :00	Coffee break	
11 :00-11 :30	EAFRINET Program on Invasive species	Dr. Wanja Kinuthia, Natural History Museum of Kenya
11 :30-12 :00	Le projet PESI (Pan-European Species directories Infrastructure) et la perspective d'une Flore & Faune Paléarctique future	Dr. Louis BOUMANS, Université Amsterdam, Université d'Oslo.
1st SESSION: Working groups : Basic issues for NAFRINET		
12 :00-12 :30	WGroup 1: Taxonomic tools / Needs assessment (Chairpersons TBD)	
12:30-13 :00	WGroup 2: Training issues / Capacity building (Chairpersons TBD)	
13 :00-13 :30	WGroup 3: Funding issues / Networking issues (Chairpersons TBD)	
13:30-14 :45	Lunch break	
2nd SESSION: Development of NAFRINET in short and medium term		
15:00	Reports from WG1 , 2 and 3	
15 :20	General discussion	
16:00		
16:00-16:30	Coffee break	
16:30-17:30	[Review / presentation] of [Concept notes / Project prospectus] received so far	
17:30-18:00	Proposals for a three year program 2010-2013	
18:00	END of DAY 1	

	Sunday 25-Apr-2010	
	DAY 2 LCC Meeting	
	Agenda Item	Principal Resource Person
	Facilitator Mohamed Elyes Kchouk	
	3rd SESSION : Progress Reports from NECI & NACIs	
09:00	ALGERIA	Pr Meriem Kaid-Harche
09:15	EGYPT	Dr Taher Issa
09:30	MOROCCO	Pr Mohamed Fennane
9:45	TUNISIA	Pr Naima Barbouche
10:00	NECI Progress Report	Pr Mohamed Elyes Kchouk
10:30-11 :00	Coffee break	
	4th SESSION : Presentations from National Focal Points CBD / GTI	
11:00	LIBYA	Dr. Saleh M. Amnissi
11:15	MAURITANIA	M. Ahmed Ould Abdel Fettah
11:30	TUNISIA	M. Nabil Hamada
	Discussion	All
12:30	6th SESSION: Selection of NETWORK COORDINATING INSTITUTE (NECI) for next 3 years 2010-2013	LCC Chair
13:30	LCC Meeting Closure	LCC Chair
14 :00	Lunch	

BioNET-NAFRINET Priorities

	Priority Actions	Short (2010), medium (2010-2011), long term (2011+)	Notes	Responsibility (coordination at national & regional levels)	Timeline	Funding
1	1. Information-related activities					
1.1	Produce registry of taxonomists & their specialism in each country	Short	Who has participated in NAFRINET in last 10 years ?	Coordinated by one person per country		In-kind from existing resources
1.1.1	Adopt a standard format		Can we use the Edit formula?	ATUTAX (Tunisia) in association with other networks in other countries		Support from European institutions?
1.1.2	Populate with specimen information		Who can do what - national/regional & global (in classical and molecular taxonomy)			Overall coordinator - ATUTAX
1.1.3	Circulate to contacts (e.g. NAFRINET LCC members, ATUTAX conference participants)					
1.1.4	Put on NAFRINET website with links to other relevant websites					
1.2	Produce registry of collections & existing data (what & where?)	Short	Metadatabase Why? E.g. for Translation of EOL pages	Coordination - Taher Issa		In-kind from existing resources
1.2.1	Adopt a standard format		Can we use the Edit formula?	ATUTAX (Tunisia) in association with other networks in other countries		Support from European institutions?
1.2.2	Produce registry of collections & existing data					
1.2.3	Put information on NAFRINET website					

	Priority Actions	Short (2010), medium (2010-2011), long term (2011+)	Notes	Responsibility (coordination at national & regional levels)	Timeline	Funding
1,3	Circulate information about finished programmes		Input into CDB GTI report	NECI avec ATUTAX and the NACIS		In-kind from existing resources
1,4	Sensitise the NGO communities on importance of taxonomy					In-kind from existing resources
1.4.1	Produce list of scientists - who is working in areas that are relevant to taxonomy	Short		To discuss?		
1.4.	Produce list of NGOs who address environment, development, etc who need to be sensitised about the importance of taxonomy - its relevance to their mission	Short	Can be used to sensitise the public about importance of taxonomy Could look to UNDP lists as a point of departure Targets? e.g. those in the environmental sector who do not necessarily understand the importance of taxonomy As a precursor to facilitating exchanges There are so many NGOs so it is essential to prioritise			
1.4.2	Sensitise NGOs e.g. presentation of BioNET slide show, utilisation of other BioNET resources	Medium		NACIs & ATUTAX		Funding?
1,5	Produce a bibliography of taxonomic publications in North Africa	Medium		NECI to coordinate		In-kind from existing resources
1.5.1	Produce a preliminary bibliography (e.g. using Google scholar)	Short				
1,6	Circulate information on relevant meetings & other activities	Short		NECI	Starts now	In-kind from existing resources

	Priority Actions	Short (2010), medium (2010-2011), long term (2011+)	Notes	Responsibility (coordination at national & regional levels)	Timeline	Funding
1.6.1	Circulate as opportunities become available					
1,7	Produce online proceedings of relevant taxonomic conferences		Not peer reviewed (not publishable in international journals, abstracts, "recycled materials")			In-kind from existing resources
1.7.1	Collect contributions from ATUTAX workshop					
1.7.2	Edit document					
1,8	Produce a strong North African taxonomic Journal	Medium/Long				Funding?
1,9	Publish in existing international journals		Journal "review flora Mediterranean" will accept articles in French (but prefer them in English)			In-kind from existing resources
1.10	Produce a bulletin (electronic)	Short	Annually	NECI		
2	Training-related activities					
2,1	Maximise use of existing training opportunities relevant to the region	Short/medium/long				
2.1.1	OPTIMA field course	short	Optima tries to do this each year (botany) plant collecting. No cost for the host country. The guests cover the expenses of local people:	ACTION: OPTIMA (through Gianniantonio) to organise	March-April 2011	OPTIMA & in-kind national contributions (logistics & time commitment)
2.1.2	Sicily summer school in plant taxonomy	Short/medium/long	20 places in total (students at masters level).	ACTION: Gianniantonio to organise to NAFRINET Coordinator who will circulate in the network	sept-10	Dipartimento di Scienze Botaniche, Università di Palermo

	Priority Actions	Short (2010), medium (2010-2011), long term (2011+)	Notes	Responsibility (coordination at national & regional levels)	Timeline	Funding
2.1.3	Training in harmful species in Mediterranean & Atlantic	Medium	1 week in Tunisia & 1 week in Portugal	Ons & Negib	2011	University de Algarve & UNESCO Institute of Coastal Ecohydrology & INAT & Faculty of Science of BIZERT
2.1.4	Training (for young taxonomists)	Short/medium	Workshops & placements (in EDIT Work Package 8) Contact Edit & perhaps negotiate for something with NAFRINET	Nejib	2010 & 2011	EDIT
2.1.5	Workshops on microbiology		Already happening	To circulate opportunities through NAFRINET Boudabous (Biodesert) FST		Various
2.1.6	Training in digitisation of specimen data	Medium	OPTIMA: Training to digitize specimens (herbarium of the Mediterranean could host the digitised images) ¹	To discuss with Gianniantonio	2011?	Herbarium Mediterraneum Panormitanum
2,2	Facilitate new training opportunities relevant to the region	Medium/long		NECI		Funding to be raised
2.2.1	Placements in country with students & teachers from country	medium				Funding to be raised
2.2.2	Training (masters) for the region	medium				Funding to be raised
2.2.3	Algeria training on new species and those that are no longer seen	medium		??	déc-10	

¹ Gianniantonio Domina (17/05/2010) we could organize a 1-2 days

course in which I (or someone else from Palermo) come with a scanner to Tunis and explain how to use it. At this moment we have a very heavy scanner but we are finding a lighter one (in a couple of months) that can be moved with a car

	Priority Actions	Short (2010), medium (2010-2011), long term (2011+)	Notes	Responsibility (coordination at national & regional levels)	Timeline	Funding
3	Maximising the effectiveness of biological collections					
3.1	Produce registry of collections & existing data (what & where?)		See Activity 1.2	NACI Tunisia (Naima) Overall Coordination (Taher) NACIs (designate people and groups - "working groups?" e.g. ATUTAX) Morocco, Algeria (NECI), Mauritania (equivalent of ATUTAX - National Biodiversity Committee), Egypt (NACI - Taher), Libya (EGA - Saleh)		In-kind from existing resources
3.1.1	Adopt a standard format	Short	Can we use the Edit formula?	ATUTAX (Tunisia) in association with other networks in other countries		Support from European institutions?
3.1.2	Produce registry of collections & existing data		Including a photo collection (regional): establish a photographic library (especially of microscopic biota)			In-kind from existing resources
3.1.3	Put information on NAFRINET website					
3.1.4	List what exists (which species are in which collections)	medium	A new project based on the successful implementation of previous activities Discuss with those elsewhere (e.g. in Europe) about how they do it	NACI to circulate requests for information		Funding to be raised
3.1.5	Database of N. African flora & fauna	Medium/long	Lots of opportunities for raising funds - call on experience of our contacts & networks Louis can help (working with Georgia) training for getting data organised			Funding to be raised

	Priority Actions	Short (2010), medium (2010-2011), long term (2011+)	Notes	Responsibility (coordination at national & regional levels)	Timeline	Funding
3.1.6	Opportunistic digitisation "on demand"		e.g. "Lifewatch approach "Botanical Museum of Berlin offered for "digitalisation on demand") Contact Botanical Museum of Berlin Check on web (Louis): http://www.e-biosphere09.org/posters/LifeWatch-H13.pdf Pour plus d'informations vous pourriez contacter Walter Berendsohn ou bien Marie Gebhardt (secrétaire) du Muséum Botanique à Berlin. www.lifewatch.eu			Can be self financing
3.1.7	Augmentation of collections		System / Structure in which you can put information in			Funding to be raised
4	IAS project for N. Africa					
4.1	Produce a list of people working on IAS in the region	Short	Linked to 1.1			
4.2	Review of IAS in N. Africa	Short		John Mauremootoo to do a prelim outline (for eventual publication in Biological Invasions?)	To complete by August 2010	
4.2.1	Consult with experts					
4.3	Produce a preliminary list of IAS	Medium	Egypt already has a list Utilise existing list to make a regional list			
4.4	IAS project for N. Africa	Medium/Long	Contact GISIN (Global Invasive Species Information Network) to test their interest in rolling out the IABIN database to the NAFRINET region			
	Note (not under a project/activity)		Optima will pay subscription for membership (if you send 30 specimens to the herbarium)			

Participants List

	Titre	Prénom	Nom	Fonction	Organisation	Département	Adresse	Ville	Zip	Pays	Courriel	Tél	fax	mobile		website
1.	Pr.	Meriem	Kaid-Harche		Université des Sciences et Technologie..	Département de Biotechnologie	B.P. 1505. El M'naouar	Oran		Algeria	arquoise2001@yahoo.fr	+21341560347	+213560322		NACI Coordinateur	
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3.	Dr.	Giannantonio	Domina		Laboratorio di Sistematica e Fitogeografia	Dipartimento di Scienze Botaniche Università degli Studi di Palermo	via Archirafi, 38	Palermo	90123	Italy	gdomina@unipa.it	+3909123891209	+390916238203	+393386552535	project PESI et E+M PlantBase	
4.	Dr	Wanja	Kinuthia	Coordinator EAFRINET	National Museums of Kenya	Zoology	PO BOX 40658-00100	Nairobi		Kenya	eafrinet@africaonline.co.ke					
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12.	Pr	Faouzia	Charfi-Cheikhr ouha	Professeure Enseignement supérieur	Faculté des sciences de Tunis	Biologie	Campus universitaire	Manar II	2092	Tunisie	f.charfi@fst.rnu.tn	+216 (71) 872 600	+216 (71) 885 480			
13.	Dr	Mohamed Néjib	Daly Yahia	Associate Professor	Faculté des Sciences de Bizerte	Sciences de la Vie	7021, Zarzouna,	Bizerte	7021	Tunisie	Nejib.daly@gmail.com ; nejib_daly@yahoo.fr	+216 72591906 (office 257 ; laboratory 322)	+216 72590566	+216 98559311		http://www.fsb.rnu.tn/
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17.	Dr	Abderrazzak	smaoui							Tunisie	abderrazak.smaoui@gnet.tn					
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19.	Dr	John	Mauremootoo	Regional Partnerships Officer	BioNET-International	BioNET Secretariat	BioNET-International Secretariat Bakeham Lae	Egham Surrey	TW20 9TY	UK	jmauremootoo@gmail.com	+44(0) 1934 876565	+44(0) 1934 876565	+44(0) 784 621 9689		

Acknowledgements

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All our thanks to all who contributed directly or indirectly to the success of this meeting.