

>WHAT'S ON IN MONTPELLIER?

Report on ABC-Network

The european network of clusters in agro-biotechnologies

Agropolis International Association has taken part in the ABC-Network financed in the framework of a Specific Support Action of the EU in the 6th Framework programme.



■ This project had a duration of 3 years (december 2005 to August 2008); it gathered partners* focusing on biotechnology transfer and innovation in the fields of agriculture and agro-food sector; it aimed at launching, supporting and promoting the clusters under construction.

Four main objectives

- To develop long term co-operations between clusters related to 'biotechnologies applied to agriculture and the agro-food sector';
- To promote and facilitate the development of joint projects between the clusters and their partners with the support of clusters of excellence at world level that were involved in the project;

- To issue and disseminate a guide of good practices for the present clusters and the clusters to be, related to the same issues;
- To create a sustainable ABC network.

Results

- A good knowledge of each cluster partner as regards research potential, economic development, governance or services offered to the members;
- Strong relationships between Montpellier and Milan regarding research projects and collaborations between the business innovation centres of the 2 cities;
- Documents on good practices

in the framework of the innovation process in agriculture and food;

■ The development of partnerships with 3 other networks of clusters: two of them from Europe INNOVA (Enfi and Netbioclue) and another one, Fine, located in Wageningen (the Netherlands).

■ A document on strategic recommendations for the creation and management of clusters focusing on agriculture and agro-biotechnologies.

This project has allowed to initiate an original process leading to various further projects. The next research themes result directly from the critical points and lessons that were identified in common. The network has become the hard core of a larger group of european clusters dealing with ABC-Network major themes.

For more information
www.europe-innova.org

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. Enfi : European Networking for Financing Food Innovation
. Netbioclue : NETworking activity for BIOTEchnology CLUsters in Europe
. Fine : Food Innovation Network Europe

>COOPERATION

ARCUS project - Languedoc-Roussillon/China Sino-French Cooperation on sustainable development: Chongming eco-island

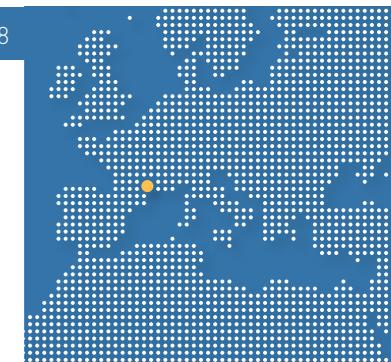
Aware of environmental issues, China is seeking alternative models of development. The Chinese Government and the Municipality of Shanghai have designed a pilot field project on ecological development based on an island.

■ A model for ecological and sustainable development and a symbolic event for the Shanghai World Expo 2010, it combines economic growth and environmental preservation.

To provide a scientific monitoring of this pilot ecological project, the Municipality of Shanghai has created the 'Chongming Ecological Centre for Scientific and Technological Innovation', gathering six research laboratories including a French-Chinese one.

Based on this idea of a pilot laboratory and issues related to sustainable development a cooperation project was built up between Shanghai and Languedoc-Roussillon scientists and coordinated by Agropolis International.

It counts 15 innovating research actions structured around 3 main themes: sustainable water management; energy and waste; ecology and eco-agriculture.



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Cross educational actions and technology transfer actions are part of the project.

French funding for 3 years (2007-2009) is 900.000 euros, 500.000 coming from ARCUS programme (250.000 euros provided by the French ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and 250.000 euros by the Languedoc-Roussillon Region).

This inter-institutions and inter-disciplinary project serves as an example of cooperation, it encourages synergies between chinese and french teams by associating research, research training and technology transfer. It points out the high potential for multi-sector cooperation between the Languedoc-Roussillon region and the Municipality/Province of Shanghai. It is a symbol of connections between local and national levels and serves as a gateway for scientific, educational and economic exchanges between the two countries.

In the framework of these exchanges, a scientific meeting took place in Montpellier in December 2008 with all the French and Chinese partners of the Arcus project.

For more information
www.agropolis.fr/international_eng/china.html

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Photo: Inauguration of the sino-french laboratory

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World centre for agricultural,
food and environmental sciences

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>IN SHORT



■ The Final report on the 13th World Water Congress held in Montpellier in september 2008 on 'Global changes and water resources: confronting the expanding and diversifying pressures' has just been issued. The event was organised under the aegis of the International Water Resources Association by ILEE, Verseau Développement Association; it brought together 1190 participants coming from 85 countries.

For more information
www2008.msem.univ-montp2.fr



■ Within the Seventh Framework Programme dealing with 'Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology' Agropolis International has been selected for the implementation of a project called 'European Network for integrating novel technologies for food processing'

This project involves, in the Languedoc-Roussillon region, the Research Unit of Agropolymer Engineering and Emerging Technologies (IATE) that includes

CIRAD, INRA, Montpellier SupAgro & UM2, together with the competitiveness cluster Q@LI-MEDiterrannée; it is co-ordinated by the German Institute for food technology located in Quakenbrück.

Several research institutes from 11 European countries are also partners of the project.

For more information
UMR IATE:
www.montpellier.inra.fr/umr-iate

Q@LI-MEDiterrannée:
www.qalimediterranee.fr

Deutsches Institut für Lebensmitteltechnik:
www.dil-ev.de

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■ French-Chile co-operation:
a meeting between Chilean and French researchers on agro-food technologies took place in Montpellier in October 2008, at the Conicyt's request within the framework agreement signed with the Agence Nationale française de la Recherche (ANR). 40 participants including 13 Chilean researchers and 23 French scientists working in Montpellier and in other regions in France took part in this meeting that aimed at identifying joint projects likely to be accepted within the ANR calls for tenders. A follow up of these projects will be set up with the Chilean colleagues.

For more information
www.agropolis.fr/international/chili.html
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>LOOKING FOR PARTNERSHIPS

DURAS Project

Innovative partnerships for sustainable development.



■ The concept of the 'agricultural innovation system' implies an opening-up of the sources of agricultural innovation, to include actors beyond the agricultural sector, as well as to involve stakeholders who have traditionally not been involved, such as NGOs and farmers' organizations (FOs).

The DURAS project, *Promotion du développement durable dans les systèmes de recherche agricole au Sud*, (Promotion of sustainable development in southern agricultural research systems) was conceived in order to support the opening-up process being promoted by the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), and especially to help strengthen the

involvement of southern stakeholders in the agricultural research and innovation process by ensuring that their voices are heard at the international level.

The project was an important initiative which had a high degree of relevance to the agricultural research for development needs of stakeholders in agricultural research for development (ARD). The support provided through DURAS assisted GFAR in its role of facilitating the establishment of research priorities at regional and sub-regional levels as well as in mobilization of civil society organisations in the regions. This was particularly significant at a time when efforts were being made to encourage joint priority setting with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). The DURAS Competitive Grants Scheme (CGS) also supported 12 multi-stakeholder and partnership-driven agricultural research for development (ARD) projects in Africa and Asia.

Significant results :

- Establishment of NGOs networks in sub-Saharan Africa and the Asia-Pacific region;
- Development of Regional Agricultural Information Systems (RAIS);

- The design of an interactive and decentralized EGFAR which, when fully functional, will bring significant benefits to a wide range of users;
- Innovative models for facilitating stronger and more sustainable partnerships between civil society organizations and formal research organizations;
- Scientific innovations which have the potential for wider up- and out-scaling (e.g. a new agent for biological control of nematodes);
- Some research initiatives which have demonstrated the scope for sustaining themselves beyond the term of the DURAS project;
- Influence on policy (e.g. emergence of a legislative framework for protecting traditional knowledge in South Africa);
- Linkage with other initiatives or development of new networks or projects (e.g. establishment of local innovation platforms in West and Central Africa).

The project was launched in April 2004 with funding from the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. It was officially closed on 30 June 08.

For more information
www.duras-project.net
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>TRAINING

International network in rural and agricultural training (FAR)

The issues related to the professional training of rural populations in order to fight against poverty and hunger in the world.

■ At a time when the international community recognises the importance of agriculture as a factor for development and food safety, it is useful to claim that one of the key elements of this development is to give access to education and professional training to the people living in rural areas.

However, the professional trainings to be set up will be efficient, accurate and sustainable only if they are part of global policies for the rural areas including strategies for the increase in production and productivity, access to land and markets, management of resources, etc.

The executive secretariat of the international network FAR is located in Montpellier; it assembles the stakeholders related to this field (from about 20 African countries) that are involved in the design and management of training system engineering for groups

of people working in the rural sector including basic producers.

The network encourages exchanges between the stakeholders and reinforces discussions and the publication of references through specialised reports, workshops, seminars and training sessions.

The second international conference of the network took place in May 2008 in Tunis; it has underlined how important it is for the stakeholders to work in synergy in order to develop training systems that are varied and reactive, well adapted to the technical and economic local means as well as to the needs of the population.

Stakeholders include: the State, local authorities, educational funds, farmers associations, research and development institutions, training institutes for farmers, craftsmen and retailers, national and international cooperation organisations for development, etc.

The AFD (*Agence Française de Développement*) has entrusted FAR network with a three year programme called ADEXFAR to reinforce in Southern countries the skills of stakeholders involved in the design,

implementation and management of national training systems engineering related to agriculture and rural areas, at professional and technical levels.

On 8-9 June, 2009 the FAR network will organise, with the FAO in Rome, a seminar gathering African decision makers and high executives as well as representatives of international organisations in order to set up a common approach dealing with 'food crisis: the training of rural populations at issue'.

The network will issue a CD displaying the main documents (proceedings, contributions, surveys, articles dealing with the issues related to network ...) that will be available on request at: far@agropolis.fr

FAR network is supported by the French ministries for Foreign and European Affairs, Agriculture and the AFD. It also gets support from Agropolis International Association.

For more information
www.far.agropolis.fr

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■ About the international course on 'Agro-biodiversity: men and plants - Tools and analysis methods' held in Montpellier in November 2008. This training in French benefited to 24 students and professionals from Southern countries involved in the study, preservation and use of plant agro-biodiversity. The candidates selected among 283 applicants came mainly from Sub-Saharan Africa, then from South America and finally from the Indian Ocean and Northern Africa. Some of them had never come to France.

The teaching aimed at helping Southern students and professionals discover the methods and tools for a multi-disciplinary analysis of diversity at different levels (plants, agro-systems, societies, knowledge and practices), to evaluate

their limits and advantages, to place conservation projects *in situ*, namely in the complex scientific, political and legal background of biodiversity conservation and use.

The training was organised by IRD and CIRAD, in partnership with several national and international institutions and Agropolis International Association. It was funded by Agropolis Fondation.

For more information: www.agrobiodiv.agropolis.fr
 Contact: ecole.agrobiodiv@agropolis.fr



>SERVICES

BOMLR Open Library (Montpellier/Languedoc-Roussillon)



With a single click you can reach the bibliographic databases of most research and higher education institutions in the fields of Agriculture and Environment*

A single click allows easy and simultaneous searching through bibliographic resources available in the libraries and documentation centres dealing with Agriculture-Food-Biodiversity-Environment; this service aims at providing better information to students, educational staff and researchers on the resources available in the Languedoc-Roussillon; it results in a considerable time-saving.

To go further, a broader access to all the documents issued by researchers, teaching staff and students of the Montpellier community (including full-text if possible) is planned.

Available since 2003, this interface was achieved thanks to a partnership between AI, the Montpellier group of university libraries (BIUM) and PUE within the framework of the open university Montpellier LR; it was supported by LR region and the state.

Today a frontpage in French and English:

■ provides a presentation of the related libraries and resource centres that take part in the project;

■ offers several interfaces to:

- show the location of the documents listed in the 31 libraries catalogs;
- show the location of magazines available for consultation in research and higher education institutions;
- perform simultaneous searching including the possibility to expand the search to online external resources.

(*): Catalogs from: CIRAD, Montpellier SupAgro and centre INRA Montpellier, AgroParisTech-Engref, IAM.M, IRD, Universities in région Languedoc-Roussillon...

For more information: www.bomlr.info | Contact: contact@bomlr.fr

>COOPERATION

An example of scientific cooperation between France and Tunisia Detoxification of clams and integrated management

DR



■ Clam is a bivalve mollusc well appreciated by gastronomes. It lives under the sand of beaches or the silt of coastal lagoons. The European market -estimated at 60 000 metric tons- is almost entirely supplied by Mediterranean fishing (Spain, Italy, France, Morocco, and Tunisia).

Pollution and new coastal water warming cause uncontrolled and often toxic algal development (*Karenia selliformis*) in production zones, in particular in the Gulf of Gabès (southern Tunisia). This region has a natural clam pool which production potential is estimated at 7,500 Mt/year (UNDP, 1996), whereas the current production is only 1,000 tons today. Indeed, the algae contaminate the clams inducing a risk for human health and thus causing a ban on fishing.

Partnerships at political and economic levels have been set up between Hérault General Council (France) and the province of Medenine in order to support the development of this sector.

At scientific level there is an ongoing collaboration between Ifremer (French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea) and INSTM (National Institute of Sciences and Techniques of the Sea of Tunisia). The competitiveness cluster 'management of risks and vulnerability of territories' is also involved in this project.

A French-Tunisian workshop took place in Tunisia (4-5 December, 2008) leading to five cross-actions:

■ Support for the development and organisation of the clam sector, in

order to create favorable conditions to maintain and increase clam collecting for the benefit of 1,000 rural families in the Medenine Province;

- Elaboration of an industrial process of accelerated detoxification for clams which have been contaminated by *K. selliformis* by feeding them with healthy algae;
- Design of alert systems on factors setting off pollution;
- Research works and studies on pollution causes and risks in the Gulf of Gabès in order to improve the environmental quality and to prevent crises;
- Creation—in the future— of a Mediterranean network for the integrated management of risks related to semi-closed coastal lagoons which are rich but nevertheless more and more vulnerable areas.

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