



NEWSLETTER

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Periodical information bulletin for the Prometeo project co-financed by the European Union in the framework of the ENI Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) Programme “Italy-Tunisia” 2014-2020

The ENI CBC Programme “Italy-Tunisia” 2014-2020 is a bilateral cross-border cooperation programme, co-financed by the European Union under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). With a budget of EUR 33.3 million, the programme, which joint management has been assigned to the Sicilian Region’s Programming Office, aims to promote fair, equitable and sustainable economic, social and territorial development in order to foster cross-border integration and enhance the territories and resources of the two participating countries. <https://www.italietunisie.eu/>

The Prometeo project came to an end

The Prometeo Project ended on 15 December 2023.

During these last months, the project’s activities were very intense, both for the realisation of the final event held in Tunis on 14 and 15 November and for the inauguration of the research laboratories of the Universities of Tunis and Catania, as well as the field validation of the scientific protocols and the inauguration of the Prometeo Hall at the Palazzolo Acreide Municipality.

In this final Newsletter we review the events of these last months that characterised the concluding activities of the Prometeo project.

Enjoy your reading!

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Concluding remarks on Prometeo

by Project Coordinator Prof. Santa Olga Cacciola

The Conclusion of a Cross-border Collaboration for the Protection of Mediterranean Crops

The PROMETEO Project, an ambitious strategic initiative of the University of Catania, has built a bridge between two countries with different cultures but sharing the same valuable Mediterranean tree crops. This union has created a physical space for sharing and collaboration, where partners from Sicily and Tunisia have shared innovative technological solutions to common problems.



Preserving the Mediterranean Arboreal Heritage

The PROMETEO project stands as a tangible example of how cross-border collaboration can preserve the vibrant fabric of Mediterranean arboriculture. Through joint efforts in the management of phytosanitary emergencies with a particular focus on citrus, almonds and olives - vital sectors for the agri-food industry - the project embodies a shared vision, sound principles and an accentuated focus on collaboration with agricultural policy actors.

PROMETEO Manifesto: An Imprint for Protection

The PROMETEO Manifesto, produced by the project, is a decisive tool for the protection and preservation of citrus, almond and olive trees. Thanks to the synergetic action of the cross-border expertise of the PROMETEO group, a constructive discussion involving experts in the sector was initiated, generating operational solutions for the protection and sustainability of the main Mediterranean crops in the face of phytosanitary emergencies.

Innovation and Knowledge Exchange

A distinctive feature of the project was the application of the open scientific method, improving the quality of services provided by the scientific and educational laboratories in the two countries. The active involvement of associated partners and various stakeholders contributed to the definition of diagnostic protocols developed in the laboratory and validated in the field on both sides of the border.

Within the physical space created by the project for sharing and collaborating in the field of applied research, i.e. the 'Laboratory for cross-border knowledge sharing' set up in Palazzolo Acreide, in the province of Syracuse, not only was the concrete exchange of knowledge, know-how, techniques and innovative practices for the protection and preservation of arboriculture encouraged, but also supported a 'cross-capitalisation' action of scientific studies on the subject and of the activities being carried out with similar and complementary project realities, focused in particular on olive growing and on the most suitable cultivation techniques to achieve a recognised production quality, as the first step of a more extensive innovative sharing and capitalisation path, which will continue well beyond the project life.

Illuminating the Mediterranean Future: Vital Exchange between Young Researchers

Sharing, then. After all, the initiative takes its name from Greek mythology. Just as Prometeo, the titan, gave fire to mankind, so Prometeo, the project, aims to spread knowledge and the results of applied research among all the operators of the most important typical Mediterranean tree crops, from growers to technicians, from packers to traders, with a focus on food safety and the exchange of knowledge between young researchers, who have had the opportunity to attend the workshops set up on both sides of the project. This path of sharing not only transmits scientific knowledge to the communities involved, but also directs the vitality of research into the future, with young researchers as guides to progress in Mediterranean research.

Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals

Finally, the PROMETEO Project has significantly contributed to several of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. From ensuring health and well-being for all, to promoting quality, equitable and inclusive education, to reducing inequalities and supporting sustainable patterns of production and consumption. The project fits perfectly with the global vision of an equitable and sustainable development based on the use of green products for the control of quarantine or emerging diseases, indirectly contributing to initiatives aimed at countering the effects of climate change

In conclusion, the PROMETEO project remains an inspiring example of how cross-border collaboration, knowledge sharing and innovation can shape a sustainable future for Mediterranean crops and the communities involved.

The Prometeo Final Event

On 14 and 15 November 2023, the closing seminar of the Prometeo Project was held in Tunis, entitled 'Tackling phytosanitary emergencies: the PROMETEO Manifesto as a decisive tool for the treatment of citrus, almond and olive trees', with the participation of all Tunisian and Italian project partners.

The closing ceremony was an opportunity to present the project's main results and indicators of achievement, where each partner presented the activities carried out and the impact of PROMETEO on their institutions.

Two round tables were held during the ceremony. The first one was dedicated to the discussion on synergies for the sustainability and protection of Mediterranean cultures, with an exchange of ideas on the drafting of the Final Manifesto of the Prometeo project, while the second one was devoted to the sustainability modalities and perspectives of the PROMETEO cross-border partnership, with the participation of the associated partners and various stakeholders.



The second day of the event was dedicated to a visit to the University of Tunis and to the Technology Platform of the Mycology, Pathology and Biomarkers Laboratory, which was set up as part of the research activities of the Prometeo project.





The Prometeo Research Laboratories

As part of the research activities of the Prometeo project, three research laboratories were inaugurated at the Universities of Tunis and Catania.

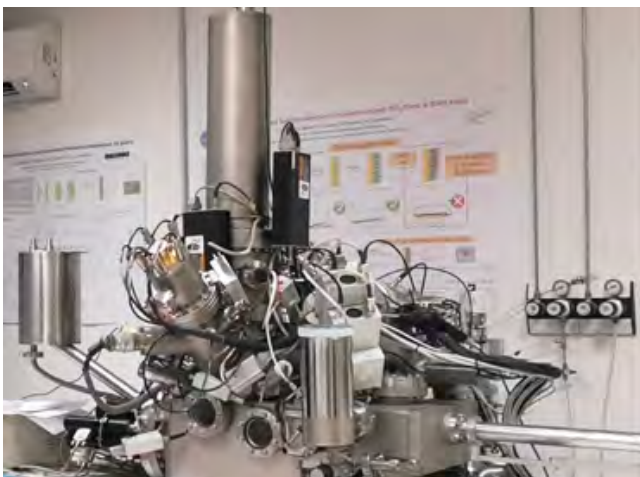
On 27 October 2023, the Technology Platform of the Mycology, Pathology and Biomarkers Laboratory was inaugurated on the premises of the LMPB at the Department of Biology of the Faculty of Science in Tunis.

This state-of-the-art laboratory features real-time PCR (05 colours), Scan Drop, Mulch Homogeniser for DNA extraction, UV/VISIBLE Monochromator Microplate with spectral scanning and other high-tech equipment.



In December 2023, the two Prometeo research laboratories of the University of Catania were inaugurated at the Department of Agriculture, Food and Environment (Di3A) and the Department of Chemical Sciences (DSC), respectively.

In particular, at the Plant and Molecular Pathology Laboratory of the Di3A Department, a technological platform dedicated to the development and validation of diagnostic protocols for the three Mediterranean crops covered by Prometeo (almond, olive and citrus), while at the DSC Department, the Materials Science laboratory was enriched with a secondary ion mass spectrometer equipped with the functions required to analyse samples of typical Mediterranean crop products and to carry out experimental protocols for the characterisation of materials used in modern agriculture and the food industry.



Field validation of scientific protocols

The Prometeo project, through research activities conducted in the laboratories of the Universities of Catania and Tunis, led to the development and publication of no less than 15 scientific protocols in Plant Pathology, Entomology and Materials Science for the diagnosis of plant diseases and the protection of typical Mediterranean tree crops such as citrus, almond and olive trees.

The protocols have been published in previous Newsletters; in these last months of activity, all protocols have been validated through experimental field trials conducted by project partners and associates, as part of the Prometeo project activities.

Below are some photographs of the experimental field activities.



Validation of scientific protocols on olive trees



Validation of scientific protocols on citrus fruits



Validation of scientific protocols on almond trees

The Prometeo Hall in Palazzolo Acreide

On Monday, 11 December 2023, the Sala Prometeo (Prometeo Hall) of the Palazzolo Acreide Municipality was officially inaugurated. This room was converted from the old library room and is used for the research and communication activities of the Prometeo Project.

In the presence of the Mayor of the Municipality of Palazzolo Acreide Dr. Salvatore Gallo and the Prometeo Project Coordinator Prof. Santa Olga Cacciola, as well as the local authorities and the partners and associates of the Prometeo project, a completely renovated and refurbished meeting room was placed at the disposal of the scientific community and citizenship. The hall will be permanently dedicated to the activities and events that will be organised within the framework of the initiatives of the bilateral cross-border cooperation programme, co-financed by the European Union, with the aim of promoting fair, equitable and sustainable economic, social and territorial development in order to foster cross-border integration and enhance the territories and resources of the two participating countries.



Photos of the room at the start of the Prometeo project



Photos of the Prometeo Hall today

The Prometeo Manifesto

During the final event of the Prometeo project, held in Tunis on 14 and 15 November 2023, the Prometeo Manifesto was published, a manifesto for the exchange of innovative solutions that represents a testament to cross-border collaboration between Sicily and Tunisia to preserve the vibrant fabric of Mediterranean arboriculture.



Manifesto for the exchange of innovative solutions.

In the dedication to preserving the vibrant tapestry of Mediterranean arboriculture, Project PROMETEO emerges as a testament to cross-border collaboration, uniting Sicily and Tunisia. With a collective commitment to addressing the challenges posed by emerging diseases in the vital agri-food sectors of citrus, almond, and olive, we articulate our shared vision, principles, and an amplified focus on engaging policy makers.

SHARED PRINCIPLES:

Cross-Border Collaboration:

PROMETEO envisions a collaborative landscape that transcends geographic and political boundaries. We actively seek to involve policymakers from both regions, fostering collaboration that integrates local and cross-border perspectives.

Open Knowledge Exchange:

The success of PROMETEO relies on transparent and open communication channels. We commit to ensuring policymakers have access to the wealth of knowledge shared on our platform, fostering an environment where evidence-based policies can be crafted.

Innovation and Adaptability:

PROMETEO recognizes policymakers as key stakeholders in crafting regulations that foster innovation. We pledge to collaborate with them to develop policies that support the adoption of cutting-edge technologies and adaptive strategies in agriculture.

Community and Policymaker Engagement:

As we actively engage with local communities, we extend this engagement to policymakers. Through dialogues, workshops, and regular consultations, PROMETEO aims to create a shared understanding that informs policies supportive of sustainable agricultural practices.

Environmental Stewardship:

Sustainability is the foundation of PROMETEO's mission. Policymakers are critical partners in shaping regulations that encourage environmentally responsible practices. We commit to working closely with policymakers to advocate for and implement policies that prioritize environmental stewardship.





FUTURE LEGACY OF MEDITERRANEAN AGRICULTURE

As we embark on this transformative journey under the banner of Project PROMETEO, let this manifesto serve as a call to action, inviting policymakers to join hands with researchers, farmers, and stakeholders. Together, we can forge policies that not only protect our shared agricultural heritage but also ensure a resilient and sustainable future for Mediterranean arboriculture. As we close the Italy-Tunisia Transborder Research Project, we pave the way for a future where the legacy of Mediterranean olives, oranges, and almonds continues to flourish. Though the project concludes, our commitment to sustainable agriculture and cross-border collaboration remains steadfast.

Legacy Continuation:

We pass the torch to future initiatives, urging them to build upon our research and carry forward the mission of preserving and advancing the cultivation of olives, oranges, and almonds in the Mediterranean. May our findings be a foundation for sustained agricultural excellence.

Knowledge Legacy:

The insights gained during this project are a collective treasure. We emphasize the importance of documenting and sharing this knowledge with the broader scientific community, ensuring that our discoveries serve as a valuable resource for researchers, farmers, and policymakers alike.

Innovation Beyond Borders:

While our project focused on Italy and Tunisia, we encourage future endeavors to expand collaboration across additional Mediterranean nations. The challenges and solutions are shared; thus, the pursuit of agricultural sustainability should be a collective effort transcending geographic boundaries.

Technological Integration:

We anticipate future projects incorporating emerging technologies to address evolving challenges. The integration of artificial intelligence, precision agriculture, and innovative cultivation techniques will be crucial in enhancing the resilience and productivity of Mediterranean crops.

Youth Engagement:

The future lies in the hands of the next generation. We advocate for the active involvement of youth in agricultural research and sustainability initiatives. Empowering young minds ensures a dynamic and forward-thinking approach to the challenges that lie ahead.





Adaptability to Climate Change:

Recognizing the increasing impact of climate change, we urge future projects to prioritize research on crops' adaptability. Developing varieties resilient to changing climate conditions is essential for ensuring food security and preserving agricultural traditions.

Continued Collaboration:

The spirit of collaboration should endure. We encourage ongoing partnerships between research institutions, governments, and agricultural stakeholders. Collective efforts amplify the impact, fostering a collaborative environment that transcends political and geographical boundaries.

Public Awareness:

A continued focus on raising public awareness about the importance of sustainable agriculture is paramount. Future initiatives should actively engage with communities, promoting a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness between agriculture, culture, and the environment.

Policy Influence:

Advocacy for policies supporting sustainable agricultural practices should persist. Future projects must actively engage with policymakers, advocating for decisions that prioritize the long-term health of agricultural ecosystems and the communities they support.

As we conclude this chapter, we envision a future where the lessons learned and relationships forged during the Italy-Tunisia Transborder Research Project serve as catalysts for enduring change. Let this manifesto inspire those who follow, ensuring a bountiful and sustainable future for the Mediterranean's agricultural treasures.



General information on PROMETEO

Main beneficiary

BP-PP1: Università degli Studi di Catania (UNICT)

Partners

PP2: Université de Tunis El Manar (UTM)

PP3: Centre Technique des Agrumes (CTA)

PP4: Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique de Tunisie (INRAT)

PP5: Agence Nationale de Promotion de la Recherche scientifique (ANPR)

PP6: Comune di Palazzolo Acreide (PALAZZOLO)

PP7: Centro di Ricerca per l'Innovazione e Diffusione della conoscenza (CERID)

PP8: Expergreen S.R.L. (EXPERGREEN)

PROMETEO PROJECT IN NUMBERS

Duration	24 months
Project start-up	29/10/2021
Date of completion	15/12/2023
N. of project Partners	8
Overall budget	1.459.103,08 €
EU Contribution	1.291.659,13 €

PROMETEO PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Number of dissemination events and thematic meetings	6
Involved participants	650+
Project website	1
Social media channels	4

OUR CONTACTS

Project website: <https://www.prometeo-italietunisie.eu>

E-mail address: info@prometeo-italietunisie.eu

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Prometeo.ItalieTunisie>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/prometeo_italietunisie/

Twitter: https://twitter.com/prometeo_ItaTun

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@prometeoitalietunisie4919>



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