

Newsletter from the European Plant Science Organisation



EPSO News N° 25/ April 2012

In this issue:

Editorial

Editorial

FAO–EPSO workshop: 25–27 June 2012, Rome

EPSO Activities

- EPSO input to FACCE-JPIs
- EPSO Board meeting 9.3.2012
- FESPb-EPSO Plant Biology Congress – early bird until 30.4.2012
- 7th EPSO Conference, Greece,
- 2013: themes and chairs decided
- Global Plant Council: registered
- ERC panels & plant scientists
- Risk Assessment and Regulations Working Group
- ‘Plants for the Future’ ETP & plant breeding

Members’ News

- Research commissioner visits Australia and New Zealand
- Tri-National Arabidopsis meeting
- ABIC 2012 – New Zealand and EPSO members welcome you!
- AgreenSkills mobility programme
- Ghent Bio-Economy Summer School
- COST Action – Mineral-improved crop production
- Saclay Plant Sciences 10-year grant
- New Center for Dynamic Molecular interactions, Copenhagen

Outreach Activities

- Fascination of Plants Day news

European and Global Research Programmes

- Overview of ERA-CAPS
- Upcoming FP7 deadlines
- ERA-net call deadlines

National Research Funding

- Panorama of plant research funding opportunities in France

Upcoming Meetings

Career Opportunities

About EPSO

FAO–EPSO Workshop, 25–27 June 2012, Rome

How to ensure food security for the poorest in society remains a widely recognised and urgent concern, including for many plant scientists engaged in making contributions towards this goal. Today, more than 1 billion people suffer from hunger and undernutrition on a daily basis. Almost 2 billion smallholder producers depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Efforts to improve food security face many challenges including human population growth, food and feed demand, energy demand, limits to agricultural land area expansion, and climate change impacts on agricultural production.

Between now and 2050 when the human population will reach 9 billion people, it will be necessary to grow more food with less land, using less resources. One hectare of land will need to feed 5 people in 2025, compared to 2 in 1960. Consequently, the sustainable intensification of smallholder production, including reducing the environmental footprint of agriculture, will be necessary. Plant science and scientists will have an important role to play to meet the sustainable intensification targets.

When compared to other regions, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) faces the biggest challenge in achieving the eradication of extreme hunger and poverty. The proportion of undernourished people remains highest in SSA at 30% in 2010, or 239 million (largely rural) people. Therefore, it is a key region in which to focus any development activities as agriculture is the primary means for addressing this challenge.

Meeting this complex challenge does not only rest on scientific and technical innovations, but will also rely on institutional and policy innovations. In this context, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and EPSO are jointly organising the workshop “Plant Sciences for Sustainable Crop Production: Strengthening Partnerships between Europe and Developing Countries” at the FAO Headquarters in Rome, 25–27 June 2012. The workshop aims at increasing “Plant Science for Development” interactions to strengthen food security and to establish long-term partnerships in plant science research, education, technology transfer and capacity building. Participants will be from academia, foundations, companies and policy makers from Europe and developing countries (mainly SSA).

Mechanisms for building such partnerships will be explored and, as a first step, 3 pilot project proposals focusing on crops of high importance for SSA countries will be developed: 1) maize and associated legume crops; 2) cassava value chain and 3) underutilized/local fruit and vegetable crops. The outcome of the workshop will be the three pilot project proposals and a White Paper on needs and opportunities for long-term joint activities between EPSO, FAO and developing country partners.



The workshop is being prepared by a joint EPSO–FAO Organising Committee, composed of an [FAO Team](#) led by [Kakoli Ghosh](#) and an EPSO Team: JC Glaszmann, K Metzloff, E George, B Osborne, C Spillane, S Lewicki-Dhainaut. The [Provisional Agenda for the Workshop](#) is online.

EPSO encourages all members and observers who are interested in participating in this workshop to contact Karin Metzloff as soon as possible, as the total number of participants from Europe is limited to 35.

Contacts: [Charles Spillane](#); [Karin Metzloff](#)

EPSO provides input to JPIs towards Strategic Research Agenda

The acronym **FACCE-JPI** stands for Food Agriculture Climate Change Environment Joint Program Initiative. The initiative addresses the following 5 issues:

- Sustainable food security under climate change, based on an integrated food systems perspective: modelling, benchmarking and policy research perspective
- Environmentally sustainable growth and intensification of agricultural systems under current and future climate and resource availability
- Assessing and reducing trade-offs between food production, biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Adaptation to climate change throughout the whole food chain, including market repercussions
- Greenhouse gas mitigation: N₂O and CH₄ mitigation in the agriculture and forestry sector, carbon sequestration, fossil fuel substitution and mitigating GHG emissions induced by indirect land use change

FACCE-JPI now considers replies to its consultation on these issues with stakeholders based on input. EPSO, on behalf of its members, [responded to this consultation](#). EPSO welcome this JPI initiative and the future involvement of plant scientists in this research area.

Based on the [consultation document](#), EPSO recommends for instance further consideration of the following:

- More emphasis on basic/fundamental research in the plant sciences, including work on abiotic/biotic resistance and the use of model plant systems as an essential requirement for underpinning applied investigations and commercial activities.
 - An increased focus on crop adaptation focussing in the short term on small grain cereals and legumes.
 - More investment in an examination of beneficial interactions between plants and microorganisms for improved resource (N, P and water) use, including the potential for establishing novel N-fixing associations.
 - Identification of improved farming systems, including ways to utilize waste products from agriculture more effectively.
 - To ensure that there is support for the relevant technological developments that are required in parallel with the identification of new research areas
 - Recognition of the importance of education and training if this JPI is to achieve its ambitious goals.
- Recruitment of key personnel with the appropriate expertise will be essential, particularly in the plant breeding area. **Contacts:** [Bruce Osborne](#); [Jonathan Jones](#); [Uli Schurr](#); [Karin Metzloff](#)

EPSO Board meeting 9 March 2012 discussed input to science policy, progress of EPSO events, publications and working groups – Jonathan Jones new Vice-president

The EPSO Board members met in Brussels, Belgium, 9 March 2012 and discussed the dedicated tasks of each Board member, a proposal for the new EPSO vice-president and the draft agenda for the [General Meeting 11-12 June 2012](#). Following the meeting, Jonathan Jones (Sainsbury Lab, UK) was elected unanimously as new EPSO Vice-president – congratulations!

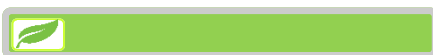
The Board had a thorough discussion on EPSO's input to the Member States' and European Parliament's debate on the European Commission's [Horizon 2020 proposal](#) (see editorial February NEWS) and on EPSO's submission to the [FACCE-JPI stakeholder consultation](#) (Joint Programming Initiative on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change) on their [Scientific Research Agenda](#).

Third agenda item were EPSO events – starting with the [Fascination of Plants Day](#) (see p. 8), progress on

the EPSO-FAO workshop 2012 (see editorial), experts suggested for a Plant ETP / Joint Research Center (JRC) workshop on plant breeding, experts for an ERA-CAPS workshop on research data, and, last not least, the EPSO conferences (see p. 5 and p. 3).

The Board had a lively debate on the twelve [EPSCO Working Groups](#) that emerged from special interests of EPSO members. Some groups are already very active, whereas others are just starting (see p. 4). For those groups aiming at a publication, it was agreed to present first statements or draft papers on the EPSO website, attracting comments from members and beyond to improve them, and finalise them. Publication in a peer review journal will be an option, not an obligation. In addition, all leaders of Working Groups have the possibility to present at the General Meeting in June a summary of their work and discuss next steps in three parallel discussion groups...

All EPSO representatives will meet for their 13th General Meeting in Copenhagen 11–12 June 2012. The Board members will meet afterwards until 13 June. **Contact:** [Karin Metzloff](#)



FAO-EPSCO Workshop 25–27 June 2012 Rome



EPSCO representatives **contact:** [Karin Metzloff](#) by 23.4.2012 to apply to participate



EPSCO General Meeting 11–12 June 2012 Copenhagen



EPSCO representatives **contact:** [Karin Metzloff](#) to confirm attendance



Plant Biology Congress 29 July–3 August, 2012 Freiburg, Germany



Register [here](#). **Contact** [Katje Lemke](#) for more information

ERA-CAPS: Coordinating Action in Plant Sciences

A new [ERA-Net for Coordinating Action in Plant Sciences](#) (ERA-CAPS) was launched earlier this year, from which coordination is funded through the [Seventh Framework Programme](#) of the European Commission. ERA-CAPS will coordinate plant science research across Europe and beyond. 26 partners from 23 countries will pool their resources and expertise in order to fund plant science research programmes to help address global challenges such as ensuring food security and providing sustainable bioenergy.

The network is coordinated by the UK [Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council](#) (BBSRC) and will run until the end of 2014. It follows on from the very successful [ERA-Net on Plant Genomics](#) (ERA-PG, 2004-2009), which invested 55M€ in transnational plant genomics research projects as well as producing influential reports and position papers.

31 delegates from 20 countries attended the official launching of ERA-CAPS on 30-31 January, including **François Constantin** from the European Commission (EC) and [Karin Metzlauff](#) from [EPSO](#). ERA-CAPS is very pleased to have EPSO as an observer as this provides ERA-CAPS with a strong link to the plant science community.

In addition to 17 European nations (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain and the UK), the network includes Canada, India, Israel, Japan, New Zealand and the USA. This will allow many of the best plant science researchers from across the world to collaborate on solving problems in plant biology.

While the EC administers about 10-15% of the public spending in research and innovation in Europe, about 85% is invested by Member States in national research activities. Wider and deeper cooperation between nations is important in order to ensure that research is focused and avoid overlaps. The networking of

organisations and scientists is an important step in tackling these issues.



The EC has provided two million Euros of funding to develop and support the coordination of the network. In addition to developing a joint research programme, ERA-CAPS will also help researchers to share data and resources across national boundaries, an increasingly important aspect of modern science.

Steve Visscher, BBSRC Deputy Chief Executive, said "Plant science research can help us address many global challenges. However the scale of these challenges means that no nation can combat them alone.

By working together through this network the scientists of many nations will be able to draw on one another's strengths, with the synergies enabling more rapid progress and enhancement of research outputs. The network will also help each nation to get better value from its investment in plant science by providing focus, direction and opportunities for sharing."

The ERA-CAPS network is still in its early stages, but it is anticipated that it will fund two calls for collaborative research projects and organise strategic workshops for identifying common priorities and activities around data sharing and open access. Projects funded by the network will involve scientists from three or more partner nations with each country funding researchers from their own national institutions.

The first call is scheduled for the second half of 2012, and will be broad and inclusive covering fundamental plant science.

The website for ERA-CAPS is under construction and will be available soon. To receive a notification of when the website is live, ERA-CAPS news and announcements of funding calls, please join the ERA-CAPS mailing list by sending an email to [Arnaud Goolaerts](#).



Contact: [Paul Wiley](#)

Upcoming FP7 deadlines - published until 19.04.2012, the following open calls relevant to plant sciences.

Call Identifier	Call Title	Publication Date	
FP7 Cooperation – Orientation paper			
Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology — Orientation paper (working document) for 2012 can be found here .			
FP7 People — Open Calls			
FP7-PEOPLE-2012-CIG	Marie Curie Career Integration Grants (CIG)	2011-10-20	2012-09-18
FP7-PEOPLE-2012-IOF	Marie Curie International Outgoing Fellowships (IOF)	2012-03-13	2012-08-16
FP7-PEOPLE-2012-IIF	Marie Curie International Incoming Fellowships (IIF)	2012-03-13	2012-08-16
FP7-PEOPLE-2012-IEF	Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowships (IEF)	2012-03-13	2012-08-16
FP7 Ideas — Open Calls			
ERC-2012-PoC	ERC Proof of Concept	2012-02-07	2012-10-03
ERA Net Calls			
ICT-AGRI (2009-2013)	Potential of ICTs in the farming sector	2012-03-01	2012-04-30

Upcoming Meetings

- [PlantSci 2012, 18-19 April 2012, Norwich, UK](#)
- [11th Gatersleben Research Conference, 23-25 April 2012, Germany](#)
- [International Symposium on Biotechnology and other Omics in Vegetable Science, 29 April-2 May 2012, Turkey](#)
- [EMBO Workshop: Genetic Stability and Change - Genome maintenance mechanisms in plants, 2-5 May 2012, Roscoff, France](#)
- [5th Workshop on Post Market Environmental Monitoring of Genetically Modified Plants: State of the Art, 9-11 May 2012, Berlin-Dahlem, Germany](#)
- [EPPN Workshop: Plant Phenotyping, 11 May 2012, Warsaw, Poland](#)
- [4th PanAmerican Plant Membrane Biology Workshop, 16-20 May 2012, Asilomar, USA](#)
- [19th EUCARPIA General Congress, 21-24 May 2012, Budapest, Hungary](#)
- [9th European Workshop: Biotechnology of Microalgae, 4-5 June 2012, Germany](#)
- [15th International Conference on the Cell & Molecular Biology of Chlamydomonas, 5-10 June 2012, Posdam, Germany](#)
- [19th meeting of the Austrian Society of Plant Biology \(ATSPB\), 7-10 June 2012, Osttirol, Austria](#)
- [XII International Symposium on the Processing Tomato - X World Congress on Processing Tomato, 9-11 June 2012, China](#)
- [Light Sensing Symposium, 11 June 2012, Geneva, Switzerland: deadline April 15](#)
- **[EPSO General Meeting, 11-12 June 2012, Copenhagen, Denmark](#)**
- [X International Symposium on Vaccinium and other Superfruits, 17-19 June 2012, Maastricht, The Netherlands](#)
- [Salt & Water Stress in Plants, 24-29 June 2012, Hong Kong, China](#)
- **[FAO-EPSO Workshop, 25-27 June 2012, Rome, Italy](#)**
- [SEB annual meeting, 29 June -2 July 2012, Salzburg, Austria](#)
- [II International Symposium on Horticulture in Europe - SHE2012, 1-5 July, France](#)
- [23rd International Conference on Arabidopsis Research, 3-7 July 2012, Austria](#)
- [7th congress of young researchers of the French Society of Plant Biology, 4-6 July 2012, Grenoble, France](#)
- [International Symposium on Plant Lipids \(ISPL\), 8-13 July 2012, Sevilla, Spain](#)
- [Plant Molecular Biology Gordon, 15-20 July 2012, New Hampshire, USA](#)
- [VII International Symposium on Irrigation of Horticultural Crops, 16-20 July 2012, Germany](#)
- [ASPB Plant Biology Meeting, 20-24 July 2012, Austin, USA](#)
- [Gordon Research Conference on Mitochondria and Chloroplasts, 29 July -3 August 2012, Rhode Island, USA](#)
- **[Plant Biology Freiburg 2012 — a Joint FESPB/EPSO conference, 29 July-3 August 2012, Germany](#)**
- **[7th EPSO Conference, 1-4 September 2013, Greece](#)**
- [Expo 2015: "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life", 1 January-1 May 2015, Italy](#)

You can keep up to date with the EPSO website:

<http://www.epsoweb.org/events/plant-meetings-agenda/list>

Career Opportunities

- [4 Senior Leadership positions, Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics, Australia](#)
- [11 Post-Doctoral Fellow positions, Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics, Australia - deadline 18.5.2012](#)
- [18 Technical Support positions, Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics, Australia - deadline 18.5.2012](#)
- [PhD student Position – Molecular Evolution of Scent Production in Petunia, University of Bern, Switzerland](#)
- [PhD position in Arbuscular Mycorrhiza Development, LMU Germany](#)
- [Post-Doctoral position: Plant Modeling, UMR, France](#)
- [Bioinformaticist, Department of Plant System Biology, University of Ghent, Belgium.](#)
- [Software/Web Developer, Department of Plant System Biology, University of Ghent, Belgium.](#)
- [PhD Plant Gene Biotechnology, ACPFG, Australia](#)
- [Predoctoral Researcher position, VIB, Ghent, Belgium](#)
- [PhD position in Arbuscular Mycorrhiza Development, LMU Germany](#)

For more information on these positions: <http://www.epsoweb.org/careers/jobs>
Send your job announcements to: [EPSO](#)