

## THE IOC WORKS CLOSELY WITH THE CLIMOLIVEMED PROJECT



**Marrakech** - On 8 April 2021, the IOC and the Institute For Higher Education And Research In Agriculture, Food Systems and the Environment (Institut Agro) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on furthering scientific cooperation. A key focus of this MoU is to encourage close cooperation in diversifying olive varieties, cropping systems and olive oil markets at a time of global change, in particular climate change.

In this context, the Institut Agro launched the ClimOliveMed project and invited the IOC to participate. This project maintains that diversity is key for sustainable olive growing in the Mediterranean region as the climate changes. It encompasses diversity in terms of varieties, production systems and stakeholders, both direct, such as olive growers, processors and developers, and indirect, such as associations, genetic resources managers and researchers.

The meeting that took place in Marrakech from 8 to 12 March 2022 aimed to foster knowledge exchange between partners, strengthen the ties between them and launch a shared vision for the project as well as a joint action plan.



The meeting had participants from CIRAD (the International Centre for Agricultural Research for Development), CNRS (the National Centre for Scientific Research), INRA (the National Institute of Agronomic Research), INRAE (the National Institute of Agronomic and Environmental Research), the IOC, FAO, the Agropolis Fondation, CBNMed, Port Cros National Park, Montpellier SupAgro, the Hassan II Academy for Science and Technology, the University of Abdelmalek Essaâdi, the University of Cadi Ayyad Marrakech, the University of Ibn Tofail, the University of Sultan Moulay Slimane, Interprolive, France Olive (French interprofessional olive association), and the Provincial (Ouezzane) and Regional (Tanger-Tétouan-Alhoceima) Olive Tree and Olive Growing Association.

Over the first three days, the ImpresS approach of the project was presented, evaluating its possible impact, the expected changes, the difficulties and opportunities that might be faced, and the strategies to achieve the desired outcome. The project actors participated as co-producers of the project.

To put the project in context with other research in the olive sector, the Head of the Technical Cooperation and Training Department of the IOC, **Catarina Bairrao Balula**, gave a lecture on related IOC activities, in particular on the network of olive germplasm banks, the THOC project and the progress of the catalogue. She highlighted the importance of collaborating with other ongoing projects with similar aims, like the Gen4Olive project and research projects that aim to analyse traits related to climate change, like drought tolerance, chilling, etc. She also underlined that the partnership with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was a priority for the IOC this year.



Ms Bairrao Balula informed the participants that the IOC has planned a workshop in 2022 to gather the coordinators of projects studying the resilience of olive trees to climate change. The goal is to create synergy and better coordinate these projects to meet their objectives and prevent repetition. ClimOliveMed will take part in this meeting.

The fourth day was focused on setting up a steering committee. On Saturday 12 March, the meeting concluded with a visit to the impressive IOC-INRA world olive collection at Tassaout, which is one of the hubs for studying varietal behaviour within the project.



The **ClimOliveMed** project strengthens ongoing research on olive growing and climate change, particularly in France and Morocco. The project uses a social approach to help stakeholders integrate its conclusions, using different varieties and production techniques to increase resilience and sustainability in the sector. The IOC will be a vehicle for disseminating this information on a broader scale.