

# EUROPEAN RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ANALYSIS AND EXPERIMENTATION ON ECOSYSTEMS



## Newsletter 6

### ISSUE SIX

Dear Reader,

2014 is fast disappearing - but what a year it has been for AnaEE! As we look back, we can be happy to announce considerable progress on all fronts: technical and data issues, innovation, legal and governance matters, funding, and stakeholder outreach.

In the past month or so, we have notably moved towards growing the consortium by bringing Israel into the AnaEE family, via Ben Gurion University. We met in Israel in November to meet with key stakeholders there, all of whom expressed great willingness to join AnaEE. Other countries will soon hopefully join. We already have a focal point in Estonia, and hope to move forward in bringing additional countries into the consortium soon.

With that in mind, AnaEE was present at an upcoming German-Italian event on research infrastructures in Berlin on December

16-17. This was a chance to meet stakeholders from Germany and elsewhere in Europe and talk about the future of our shared research landscape.

It follows on from a related conference organised in Brussels on 11 December. This conference was co-chaired by myself and Franco Miglietta and featured many key Brussels stakeholders - it notably allowed us to discuss Calls launched within Horizon 2020 and the extent by which AnaEE infrastructure may serve as a tool and platform.

I also recently attended a high-level meeting in San Francisco to discuss the ongoing implementation of an international soil warming experiment which will make use of some key AnaEE sites.

On top of all that, we have made considerable progress on key legal, governance and funding issues. Building on a very success-

ful discussion session at our annual meeting in Antwerp, we held an internal workshop in London in December to continue discussing crucial but often tough issues such as funding mechanisms, site selection, our business plan and the like.

We are also moving forward swiftly on our ongoing Call for Expression of Interest. All existing participating countries with focal points have now communicated the Call to relevant scientific communities. For site and platform managers in countries that are not yet part of AnaEE, we encourage you to contact our Project Office and Communication Officer for more information. In the new year, much more work will be done on building a sustainable European infrastructure beyond the end of our Preparatory Phase.

Kind regards,

*Abad Chabbi*

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## EDITORIAL

### AnaEE IN ISRAEL

*Abad Chabbi and Evan O'Connell*

*AnaEE Coordinator and Communication/Lobbying Officer*



November saw us travel to Israel to cement our existing cooperation, move towards bringing Israel into AnaEE officially, and meet with key stakeholders including the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, the Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF) and of course our long-standing partners at Ben Gurion University (BGU).

BGU has long been a major player in ecosystem research at a European level - notably via Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research, the environmental institutes of BGU. Over 150 Israeli and foreign research students have the capacity to perform basic and applied research related to "Dryland ecosystem Sciences".



BGU is a participant in AnaEE's sister project, ExpeER (Experimentation in Ecosystem Research), a European Integrated Infrastructures Initiative (I3) built on networking activities, joint research activities and trans-national access.

BGU's Negev LTER network - one of ExpeER's platforms and an obvious candidate to join AnaEE - aims to study the hydrogeocology of semiarid areas.

The work done at the Negev sites, hydrological laboratory, field experiment and remote sensing lab helps understand the vital ecosystem processes going on in that part of the world.

But it can also help us better understand potential future conditions faced by ecosystems in southern European countries like Spain, Italy or Greece.

Thanks to BGU's involvement in ExpeER, we had an obvious candidate in world-renowned scientist Prof. Moshe Shachak, who is our Israeli National Focal Point, working with colleagues Prof. Arnon Karnieli and Shayli Dor-Haim - as well as long-standing partners such as Dan Yakir of the Weizmann Institute of Science. As focal point, Moshe will be speaking to the entire scientific community in Israel in an inclusive manner.

*(Cont'd on page 3)*

## COMMENT FROM ANAEE

*(Cont'd from page 2)*



At their invitation, and in an effort to continue growing AnaEE to include new countries, we travelled to Israel on November 11th for two full days of intensive site visits and meetings.

We notably visited the KKL-JNF site at Eshtaol, where we met with Dr. David Brand, Head of KKL's Forest Department.

There, we presented some of AnaEE's key goals and challenges, and were able to better understand how KKL uses innovative agroforestry techniques to reclaim the desert in a way that is sustainable and lasting.



JNF-KKL is a leader in its field, bringing together both science and conservation in a way that can teach us all many things. It is also a partner for international cooperation on desert and semiarid ecosystems.

We also saw first-hand the stellar work that KKL-JNF is doing at Kdoshim Forest.

There, KKL-JNF use both observation and experimentation to test the irregularity of precipitation and the effects of drought on tree mortality - based on agroforestry management practices.

*(Cont'd on page 4)*

## NEWS UK

BBSRC is co-funding a multi-disciplinary team to coordinate the NERC-led Valuing Nature Programme, and to further develop and broaden the existing Valuing Nature Network.

The five year, c£6.5M Programme is funded by BBSRC, NERC, ESRC, AHRC and Defra. It aims to better understand and represent the complexities of the natural environment in valuation analyses and to consider the wider societal and cultural value of ecosystem services.

The BBSRC community will contribute to this – particularly in relation to sustainably enhancing agricultural production (one of BBSRC's strategic priorities) while maintaining the natural capital on which it and other ecosystem services depend.

In addition, the UK Government recently published its science and innovation strategy which include a £5.9bn investment into the UK's research infrastructure between 2016-2021. Of this, £2.9bn will go towards large capital projects to support scientific challenges. BBSRC are awaiting the outcome of the consultation which will inform the distribution of the capital funding, and further news will be available in early 2015.



## EUROPEAN VIEWPOINT

*(Cont'd from page 3)*



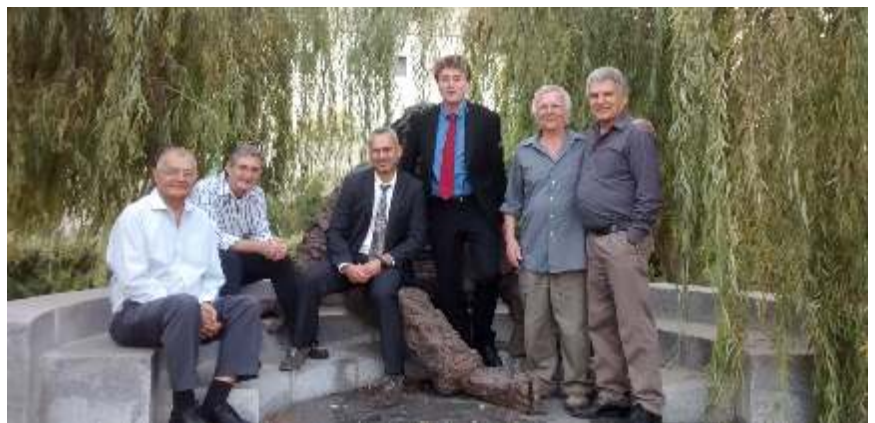
In addition, we met with Dr. Meir Zadok, CEO of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, to whom we had the pleasure of presenting AnaEE and how it can fit with Israel's research priorities (bottom right photo, with our team).

With Dr. Zadok and colleagues, we discussed how concretely we can bring Israel into our infrastructure in a way that is as inclusive as possible vis-à-vis the scientific community.

We then travelled out to the Negev to visit a host of desert and semi-desert sites, including the Zeida dry river restoration project, and LTER Yatir. We also visited the Institute of Desert Research at BGU's Sde Boker campus, over-looking a breathtaking desert canyon (above).

Through all of these meetings and visits, we hope to have laid the groundwork for lasting cooperation with our Israeli partners that can benefit all scientists across Europe and beyond. We believe that Israel is

an essential partner for AnaEE in the future and that its presence within our family will enrich our European infrastructure. We hope to have begun building the lasting ties to ensure that can happen.



Left to right: Dr. Meir Zadok, Prof. Arnon Karnieli, Dr. Abad Chabbi, Evan O'Connell, Prof. Moshe Shachak, Dr. Yossi Segal

## BUILDING BRIDGES

### ITALIAN-GERMAN WORKSHOP ON RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES: 16-17 DECEMBER 2014, BERLIN



16-17 December 2014 saw 11 of the 13 ESFRI European infrastructures in the health and food domain meet for a special meeting organised by the Italian Presidency of the EU in Berlin, along with EU OPENSREEN.

Held at the Italian Embassy (above), the workshop aimed to deal with ways to grow European infrastructures by deepening German-Italian cooperation.

AnaEE's Franco Miglietta and Evan O'Connell were present, along with scientists from across the research community in both countries, and representatives of ESFRI, the

German and Italian Ministries of Research, the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional Policy, the German Science Foundation, and the Berlin Regional Government.

The meeting was a fantastic chance for us to gain insights into best practices both in research and in legal, governance and funding issues.

It was also a chance for us to make additional contacts with relevant institutional stakeholders.

Via the Fondazione Edmund Mach (as a Preparatory Phase Partner) and the Consiglio Nazionale delle

Ricerche (CNR - a Third Party in the project) AnaEE is building a strong and sustainable Italian national node that we hope will respond to the needs of that country's research community.

At the same time, we are working to ensure that Germany is not left behind, and hope to continue work in building AnaEE Germany in 2015.

Germany has many high-quality facilities on a national level that would be a perfect fit for AnaEE.

We are committed to finding a place at the heart of our infrastructure for the German research community.



## COMMENT FROM AnaEE: GROWING AnaEE



As 2014 comes to a close, we look back at considerable success - but with our Preparatory Phase coming to an end on April 30th, 2016, we know that we have much still to do!

In past months, we have worked to grow AnaEE both in terms of giving it real substance - through the Call for Expression of Interest - and by widening its geographical scope.

You will by now be aware of our 'Call for Expression of Interest', coordinated by AnaEE's National Focal Points (full list on our website) which aims to identify sites and platforms that will ultimately be part of our European infrastructure.

This Call is a chance for us not only to judge the level of enthusiasm and interest from platform managers and owners to join AnaEE - it is also a way for us to now bring new countries into AnaEE.

We have begun doing this in earnest: Israel and Estonia have already confirmed National Focal Points and are working to ensure their countries respond to the Call.

But we have also had interest from scientists and site managers - as well as public authorities - in additional countries, from Ireland and the Netherlands to Germany and Switzerland. We will work to identify the best way to build strong national nodes in these countries, while also liaising with their public authorities to ensure AnaEE is at the heart of national strategic priorities in research funding.

At the same time, we are also growing AnaEE by giving more substance to the mechanisms and rules that will ultimately grow and define our infrastructure.

This is building on our annual meeting and stakeholder meeting in Antwerp in October 2014, which brought together high-level speakers and attendees from academia, the research world, policy-making and funding bodies and NGOs.

Since Antwerp, we have been working in earnest on ensuring we define all of the legal, governance and funding rules and mechanisms we will need in the long-term for AnaEE to be a success.

We have notably now agreed that AnaEE should indeed become a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC). This crucial decision brings with it others: how do we fund the future AnaEE ERIC? How should it be governed? How will we govern AnaEE in the period between the end of our Preparatory Phase and the official signing of the ERIC? And how should we select the host countries for the Hub and Service Centres?

We met in London recently to begin such discussions - and will now continue work into the new year.

But legal, governance and funding issues are not the only crucial matters for our consortium.

We are also continuing vital work on drafting and approving policies on data and intellectual property, which will be central to our success.

This is why we need as many countries involved as possible, as soon as possible - for while we want to make these discussions as inclusive as possible, we are also deeply committed to ensuring that everything is in place by May 2016, when the Preparatory Phase is over.

### NEWS *Italy*

The construction of an Italian node via the ongoing Call for Expression of Interest is coming along smoothly.

Coordinated by Italian National Focal Point Franco Miglietta (CNR), it is clear that there will be sites from north to south, covering a wide range of ecosystems and pressures.

More to come once the Call is closed and the full National Node can be unveiled!

### NEWS *France*

AnaEE continues to work towards building a national node in France.

Discussions are ongoing with a number of high-level research bodies across the country in view of ensuring France's contribution to the Call for Expression of Interest is as complete as possible.

France's National Node will be based on the existing AnaEE France national project, but we hope to go beyond that and include additional sites.

## UPCOMING DEVELOPMENTS AND WHAT TO EXPECT FROM ANAEE

### ANAEE COORDINATOR TO PRESENT ON "SOIL – AN ESSENTIAL RESOURCE", IN FRAUENCHIEMSEE, BAVARIA, 16-17 APR 2015

The International Expert Group on Earth System Preservation (IESP) has invited AnaEE Coordinator Abad Chabbi to speak on "Soil – An Essential Resource" at an upcoming workshop in Frauenchiemsee, Bavaria on 16-17 April 2015. The workshop is organised in cooperation with the Bavarian Ministry for Environment and Consumer Protection. The areas to be covered are soil threats like erosion and land take, Global and Regional Soil Partnerships, Climate Change and Soil Management Challenges and Infrastructures for Soil Research. Dr. Chabbi will be covering infrastructures in particular, focusing on AnaEE experimentation and the link to soil security.

### EURODISH WORKSHOP, BRUSSELS, 3-4 FEB 2015

Abad Chabbi, AnaEE coordinator, is invited as an expert in the upcoming workshop on 'EuroDISH's Perspective on Conceptual Design and Roadmap: The European Research Infrastructure for the Food and Health Domain', organised within the frame of the EC-funded project EuroDISH. The workshop will be held at the Thon Hotel City Centre, Brussels on 3-4 February 2015, and aims to reflect on and optimise the EuroDISH conceptual design and roadmap while expanding the use of EuroDISH results by the stakeholders. The report of this meeting will serve as a basis to the discussions with an exclusive and small group of experts from academia, national and international bodies and industry for newly identified food and health research infrastructures.

### SCIENCE EUROPE WORKSHOP, BONN, 18-19 FEB 2015

AnaEE Coordinator Abad Chabbi has been invited by the German Research Foundation (DFG) to give a presentation at the Science Europe Workshop on "Research Infrastructures at the academia-industry interface: the role of European networks". The workshop will bring together funders, managers and operators of facilities to investigate the following questions: Can research infrastructures at the interface between academia and industry be used more efficiently and effectively? What are the barriers? What can be improved? And how can the networking of these research infrastructures help?

### ANAEE COORDINATOR TO GIVE WINTER SEMINAR AT ROTHAMSTED RESEARCH, NORTH WYKE, DEVON, UK, 22 JAN 2015

AnaEE Coordinator Abad Chabbi will be giving a Winter Seminar at Rothamsted Research's North Wyke Farm site, funded by the Stapledon Memorial Trust (<http://www.stapledontrust.org.uk/welcome.htm>). Dr. Chabbi will talk about how AnaEE can contribute to integrated global environmental research.

FOR MORE  
INFORMATION  
ON ANAEE

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