The JatroMed project: Evaluation of the energy crop Jatropha curcas L. as a mean to promote renewable and sustainable energy for the Mediterranean region

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The aims of the project are to reinforce and upgrade the natural and socioeconomic conditions of poor rural areas in Egypt, Morocco and Algeria, to give local populations the opportunity to produce sustainable energy to cover their own needs, to assess the adaptability of Jatropha genotypes collected worldwide under the pedo-climatic conditions of the target countries and to evaluate the plant productivity under different fertilization, irrigation and pruning treatments. Three demonstration fields (4 ha each) have been successfully established in Borg El Arab/Egypt, Essaouira/Morocco, and Adrar/Algeria and four *Jatropha curcas* genotypes are evaluated in each field. The first fruits have been collected in Egypt and Morocco and the extracted oil is processed for analysis. The mechanical harvesting of the plantations is studied and a new harvesting device is under development by modifying existing harvesters and validating the results with field tests. The socio-economic and environmental impacts for the sustainable development of the selected rural areas are assessed. Knowledge transfer events are organized every year in each target country, namely: (i) training the trainers events, addressed to agronomists, local scientists, stakeholders, policy makers, investors, etc, and (ii) seminars, targeted to local farmers, rural communities, women and public.