

## BioForMoz Newsletter 3

January 20, 2021 – March 20, 2022

Dear colleagues and friends,

here is the third newsletter of the **BioForMoz project** (Support for Environmental Research AID 12089), funded by Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (**AICS**), entrusted to the Department of Biomedical Sciences of the University of Sassari to collaborate with the Biotechnology Center of the E. Mondlane University of Maputo in Mozambique, together with Dept. Biology and Biotechnology C. Darwin, Sapienza University of Rome and the Department of Earth, Environment and Life Sciences, University of Genoa.

Since the last newsletter of December 2021, we have been able to develop several actions.

The **Scholarship and Research Commission** in February and March examined the research projects submitted for the scholarships and **approved a total of 17 scholarships**: 1 postdoctoral scholarship with the Rift Valley Fever theme; 2 PhD scholarships with the subject of maize virosis and trypanosome vector fly control, respectively. 7 research grants have been approved with the following themes: Environmental *Vibrio cholerae* genomics; Buffalo population genetics; Genetics of freshwater fish homing; Environmental pollution of pesticides in rivers; Hemoglobinopathies in children; Resistance to drugs in the bacterial flora of cattle; Genetic characterization of pollinating insects. Approved also the one-year extension of 6 Master's fellowships in Biotechnology for the 6th cycle and 1 new fellowship for the Master's in Conservation Biology and Ecology. On March 23, the scholarship projects were successfully publicly presented at the Natural History Museum.

In the week of March 6, a staff from the **Center of Biotechnology and BioForMoz** carried out field work in **Zambezia** together with colleagues from Licungo University, for the isolation of insect vectors of the deadly yellowing of coconut disease (**ALC**)

As part of the scientific collaboration with Natural History Museum, at the end of February a brief mission was carried out by **Dr. Simone Sabatelli, entomologist** of the Sapienza University of Rome, to develop new research projects in entomology. Together with **Dra. Giulia Gentile, zoologist**, on a 3-month mission, developed the operation of the **BioBank** for the collection of samples from wild animals of the conservation reserves. Dra. Gentile is developing the **study of genetics of buffalo populations**. In these research areas, various samples of buffaloes, elephants and hippos were collected in the Maputo Special Reserve.

Since the beginning of March, **Dr. Claudio Ferrari, ecologist and conservation genetist**, of the University of Parma, together with researchers from the Natural History Museum has been studying the **homing genetics of freshwater fish** and has carried out a sample collection campaign in Gaza.

On March 16, our scientific director **Prof. Piero Cappuccinelli** arrived together with **Prof. Francesco Cucca, human geneticist** at the University of Sassari. A meeting was held with the geneticists of the Faculty of Medicine to establish the methods of collaboration for the study of **hemoglobinopathies in children** and a meeting with the officers of the **SERNIC** (Criminal Investigation Service) for the creation of a **human gene bank** in Mozambique.



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BioForMoz: Support for environmental research AID 12089

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In the week of March 21, **Dr. Federico Chiodi and Dra Gaia Sorini of the NGO AISPO**, carried out a management support mission for the project. The same NGO is managing the shipment from Italy of laboratory equipment and consumables for a value of about 130,000 euros that will go to support research activities.

Finally, a **generator was installed** to supply power to the laboratories of the Natural History Museum, including the office, administration and auditorium block, in the event of an emergency. Work has also begun to expand the offices of the Biotechnology Center.

At the beginning of April, a **workshop for the certification of the laboratories** is planned.

We thank you for your attention