

ARGAN TREE FACING THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The 7th edition of the international Argan congress (ICA) is a key step in our commitment to preserve and promote this emblematic tree species as a symbol of sustainability. Since the first edition, the scientific community committed to continue exploring various argane tree and ecosystem conservation and valorization related issues. "Argane tree put to facing climate change", is the theme for this edition that will highlight the need for in-depth consideration about the evolution and the impacts of climate change over the last decades.

The Arganeraie Biosphere Reserve (ABR) is facing an ever-changing environment. Indeed, climate variability and change have significant implications for the species and the whole ecosystem and its components. We are witnessing a reduction in precipitation, an increase in temperatures, and more frequent extreme weather events.

International community who commits to alleviate climate change impacts calls to focus on (i) strengthening the adaptive capacity of natural resource management practices and (ii) improving mitigation efforts. Argane tree, as an essential element of ecological balance, sustainability, and socio-economic development in Morocco, must be at the center of any climate change impact alleviation consideration.

In response to the unprecedented drought of the last decades, Morocco has implemented programs and projects, based on the achievements and the results of scientific research, to enhance adaptation and mitigation in this ecosystem. These programs have focused on the rehabilitation of the natural forest, improvement of agricultural practices, and support for the economic and social development of communities. Arganiculture the agroforestry system based on innovative agricultural practices, is an exemplary project implemented to effectively address these challenges. Arganiculture is chosen for its ability to combine both "adaptation" and "mitigation" of the effects of climate change. The 10.000 hectares of arganiculture already implemented have the potential to significantly contribute to Morocco's National Determined Contribution (NDC) goals and the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation and Actions (NAMA). This 7th edition, in line with the objectives of capitalizing and sharing the scientific research achievements, aims to (i) deepen the understanding of the species and the ecosystem and their responses to climate change in order to develop adaptation strategies; (ii) analyze results and quantify the impacts of climate change on the ecosystem, the value chain, and the rural communities; (iii) present options designed to strengthen the adaptation to climate change of natural resources, sectors, and communities; and (iv) share research and technologies capable of enhancing the adaptive and mitigative capacities to climate change effects.

Aligned with these goals, the congress offers an opportunity to enhance interdisciplinary and interinstitutional collaboration that will foster the production and sharing of knowledge and enhance all stakeholders' -mainly sector professionals- engagement.

The diversity of attendees to this 7th edition will reflect the collective commitment to a collaborative approach in addressing the climate change challenges faced by the argan ecosystem.

1. Congress Themes :

The research findings that will be presented within each theme are considered regarding three main goals: (i) analyzing and formulating climate change related indicators, (ii) describing and documenting the impacts of climate change, and (iii) sharing research projects and results that could support the design of climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Axis 1 : Structure, Management, and Conservation of the Argan Ecosystem

While facing climate change impacts, the management, and the conservation of the arganeraie ecosystem are crucial to maintaining biodiversity, structure, and environmental balance of the ABR.

Axis 2 : Arganiculture, Biotechnologies, and Genetic Improvement

Arganiculture, supported by biotechnologies and genetic improvement, provides adaptive solutions to the challenges imposed by climate change by selecting more resistant argan tree varieties and improving technical approaches that foster their adaptation.

Axis 3 : Valorization of Argan Tree Products: Health, Nutrition, Chemistry, and Technologies

Innovative valorization of argan tree products, in the fields of health, nutrition, chemistry, and technologies, becomes even more relevant in the era of climate change as it contributes to more sustainable economy and better community resilience.

Axis 4: Socio-Economy and Territorial Development of the ABR

In the context of climate change, strengthening the argan sector and its value chain is crucial for the sustainable development of the ABR. This effectively supports local communities and preserves their unique environment, ensuring harmonious and resilient territorial development.

2. Side events :

- Young Researchers Award
- Round tables
- Field visit (arganiculture project)