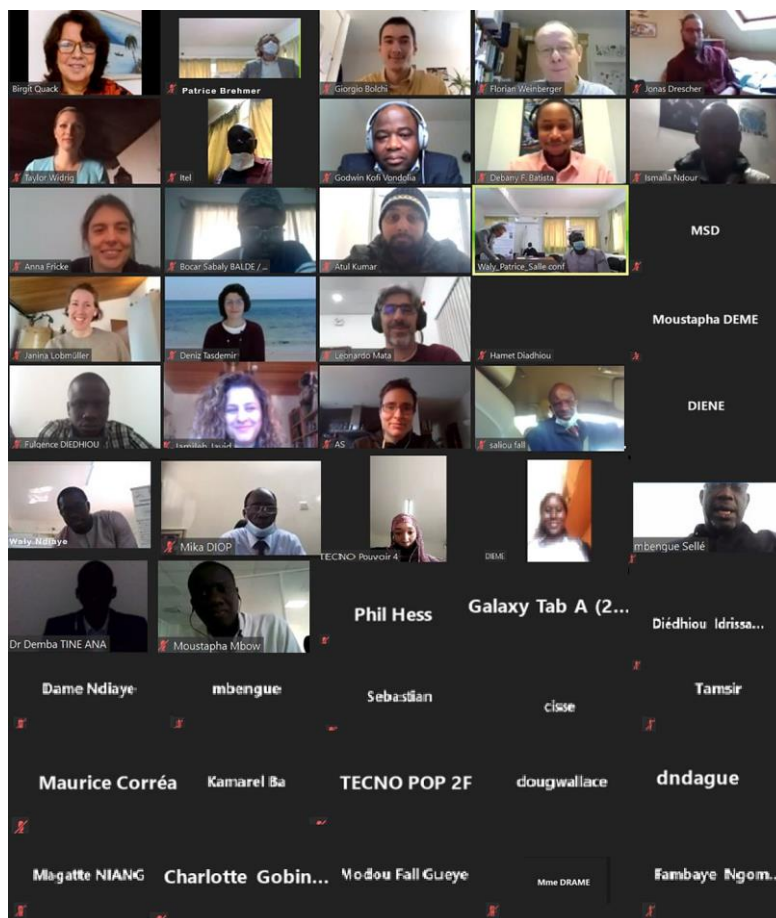


## Report about the Kick-Off workshop for the CLIMALG-SN project "Algae for blue economies resistant to climate change, biodiversity and ecosystem services in Senegal and West Africa"

*Merci pour votre participation à l'atelier de lancement du projet CLIMALG-SN "Des algues pour les économies bleues résistantes au changement climatique, à la biodiversité et aux services écosystémiques au Sénégal et en Afrique de l'Ouest"*

As part of the start activities of the CLIMALG-SN project, the Kick-Off meeting, initially planned as a face-to-face in Dakar, took place on 20. January in Dakar with only a few local participants and virtually from 9:00 to 13:30 (10:00 to 14.:30 CET) due to the Senegalese government measures against COVID19. Dr Waly Ndiaye (ISRA) and Dr. Patrice Brehmer (IRD), both Senegalese coordinators of the project, moderated the meeting and introduced the project CLIMALG-SN of the MeerWissen initiative to an audience of 50 persons, of which 35 were continually present during the whole four hour meeting. The audience consisted of national and international researchers, representatives of ministries, public institutions and some private stakeholders.



*Participants in the CLIMALG-SN kickoff meeting on January 20th in Dakar and took place online from 9 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. (10 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. CET).*

Dr Abdou NDIAYE, the new Scientific Advisor of ISRA, welcomed the implementation of the project and raised the importance of a better knowledge on algae, in order to promote their use as an alternative source of income for the local population. He encouraged the project team to establish synergies with the other ISRA centers.

A connection between the different centers of ISRA is materialized by the participation and involvement of Dr. Saliou Fall, director of the National Laboratory of Plant Production (LNRPV), in the development

and execution of the project. Dr. Fall was satisfied with the involvement of LNRPV and the Laboratoire Commun de Microbiology from ISRA-IRD-UCAD (LCM) and wishes a continuation of the partnership.

Mr Moustapha DEME (Head of Program of ISRA/CRODT), welcomed the audience. After the protocol act, and the presentation of the agenda, the CLIMALG-SN activities were presented by Dr Brehmer and Dr Ndiaye. Two presentations related to the activities of the project, entitled "Why macroalgae (seaweed)?" and "DNA fingerprinting Senegalese marine biodiversity" were held by Dr Birgit Quack and Dr Florian Weinberger, both researchers at the projects partner institution GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre of Ocean Research Kiel in Germany.

Between the presentations, some discussion developed in the audience. The project was encouraged to focus a part of its work on seaweed valorization in order to address certain key issues such as food, source of bioactive compounds, fertilizer etc. It was pointed out that CIMALG-SN is developing a data base on Senegalese seaweed, which will contain some of the required information. The overall goal of the project: the identification of the current algal biodiversity in Senegal their potential influence on faunal biodiversity, and the identification of sustainable routes of cultivation and exploitation beyond the current marginal use, were included in the discussion

The general direction of the seabed (Direction de la gestion et de l'exploitation des Fonds marins of the Ministère de la Pêche et de l'Economie Maritime, DGFEM) Mr Selle Mbengue, welcomed the project and invited the project team to cooperate with the DGFEM and offered his support in terms of data collection. He also contributed ideas about the quantification of algae biomass along the North Coast and introduced a project of his directorate on artificial reefs to restore areas affected by over exploitation and pollution. Dr Phillip Hess (Ifremer, France) also underlined the interest to collect seaweeds to monitor marine pollution including harmful algal blooms (HABs). Prof. Dr. Deniz Tasdemir, Director of GEOMAR Centre for Marine Biotechnology and Head of Marine Natural Products Chemistry Research Unit, offered her pharma-ecological expertise to characterize the chemical constituents (secondary metabolites) of seaweeds collected during the project.

Discussions were raised by the PhD candidates Modou Gueye Fall and Aminata Dième from the Department of Plant Biology of the University of Dakar (UCAD) about the total number of algae species present on the Senegalese coast. While the global algal database Algaebase ([www.algaebase.org](http://www.algaebase.org)) reports around 350 species (plus 50 synonyms, so 400) for the Senegalese coast from literature since 1950, which are now in the CLIMALG-SN database, only 250 taxa were identified in a recent work by Senegalese researchers, which also include different species, than those in the database. The CLIMALG-SN project will identify reasons for the mismatch and a thesis supervision agreement between CLIMALG-SN and UCAD will be established in order to federate actions and to answer this question effectively. After a series of interesting comments and suggestions, Dr Hamet Diaw Diahdiou former head of CRODT expressed his availability in helping in the implementation of the project and support the project with his knowledge and experience.

Although the workshop was conducted online, which was not favorable for the participation of the local population, several investigators and beach assistants were present. We emphasized that the local initiatives, like the use of algae in the development of ice packs for the preservation of fish, will be identified and communicated with other stakeholders, as the National Aquaculture Agency (ANA, Agence Nationale de l'Aquaculture), represented by Dr. Tine during the meeting. He underlined the commitment of ANA to join the action and plan to raise the public awareness on seaweed in a cooperation between the project and the agency.

The meeting was closed by Dr Mika Diop, representative of the inter-governmental organization the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC), acting for seven neighboring countries, and Dr Modou Thiaw representative of the Director of CRODT (who was unavailable due to a United Nations meeting).

Please find a news article, related to the workshop on the MeerWissen project site: <https://meerwissen.org/resources/news/detail/kick-off-workshop-sustainable-blue-growth-with-seaweed-in-senegal>