

## **Two ECOAFRIK researchers participated in a Workshop on Biodiversity of the Benthic Fauna of Cape Verde**

A workshop on biodiversity of the benthic fauna of Cape Verde Archipelago was held from 24th to 29th March in Mindelo (San Vicente Island, Cape Verde). The workshop brought together experts from the ECOAFRIK Project, which is led by the Spanish Institute of Oceanography (IEO), and the Cape Verdean *Instituto Nacional de Desenvolvimento das Pescas* (INDP).

The main objective of the workshop was to review the benthic invertebrate specimens collected onboard the Norwegian *R/V Dr. Fridtjof Nansen* during the ecosystemic survey conducted in June 2011 in waters of the Cape Verde Archipelago. In addition, this workshop performed a preliminary taxonomic identification of the most representative Cape Verdean benthic groups, such as prosobranch molluscs, echinoderms, cnidarians and sponges.

Two researchers from the ECOAFRIK team participated in the workshop: Fran Ramil, Professor in the Faculty of Marine Sciences (University of Vigo, Spain) and coordinator of the benthic taxonomic study of the African region; and Belen Calero, a specialist in echinoderms. Cape Verdean Researchers Vanda Monteiro, who is monitoring the study in Cape Verde, and Sandra Correia (both belonging to Mindelo INDP), were accompanied by two students of biology at the University of Cape Verde, Keider Neves and Isabel Fortes, who began their training in taxonomy. From now on, Keider Neves will be in charge, under the guidance of the Spanish team, of the taxonomic study of the invertebrates' collection. Next fall, Keider Neves will make a first stay at the University of Vigo to continue his training.

This workshop was held under the auspices of ECOAFRIK, a IEO project that coordinates the activities related to the research and training of young scientists from regional institutions in the study of benthos, and which is within the larger framework of the Project for the Protection of Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME),

The workshop was made possible thanks to the funding granted by the MAVA Foundation to the ECOAFRIK Project in November 2013. In the next four years, this funding will allow the preparation of a catalogue of the Northwestern African benthic species and habitats.

Undoubtedly, this workshop is a success for the CCLME project and for the ECOAFRIK team, since it strengthens the cooperation ties with African institutions and launches a new research line in the INDP of Cape Verde. Therefore, this new research line will soon enable the INDP to conduct their own studies on the biodiversity of the extremely rich benthic communities inhabiting the volcanic sea Cape Verdean bottoms.

**For more information, please visit:**

[www.indp.cv](http://www.indp.cv)

[www.canarycurrent.org/](http://www.canarycurrent.org/)

<http://www.ecoafrik.es/>



Workshop participants at the entrance of the INDP in Mindelo (from left to right: Belen Calero, Vanda Monteiro, Fran Ramil, Isabel Fortes, Keider Neves and Sandra Correia)



Participants at work in the laboratory of the INDP, and a panoramic view of Mindelo