

Enhancing research cooperation with Morocco in aquaculture and parasitology

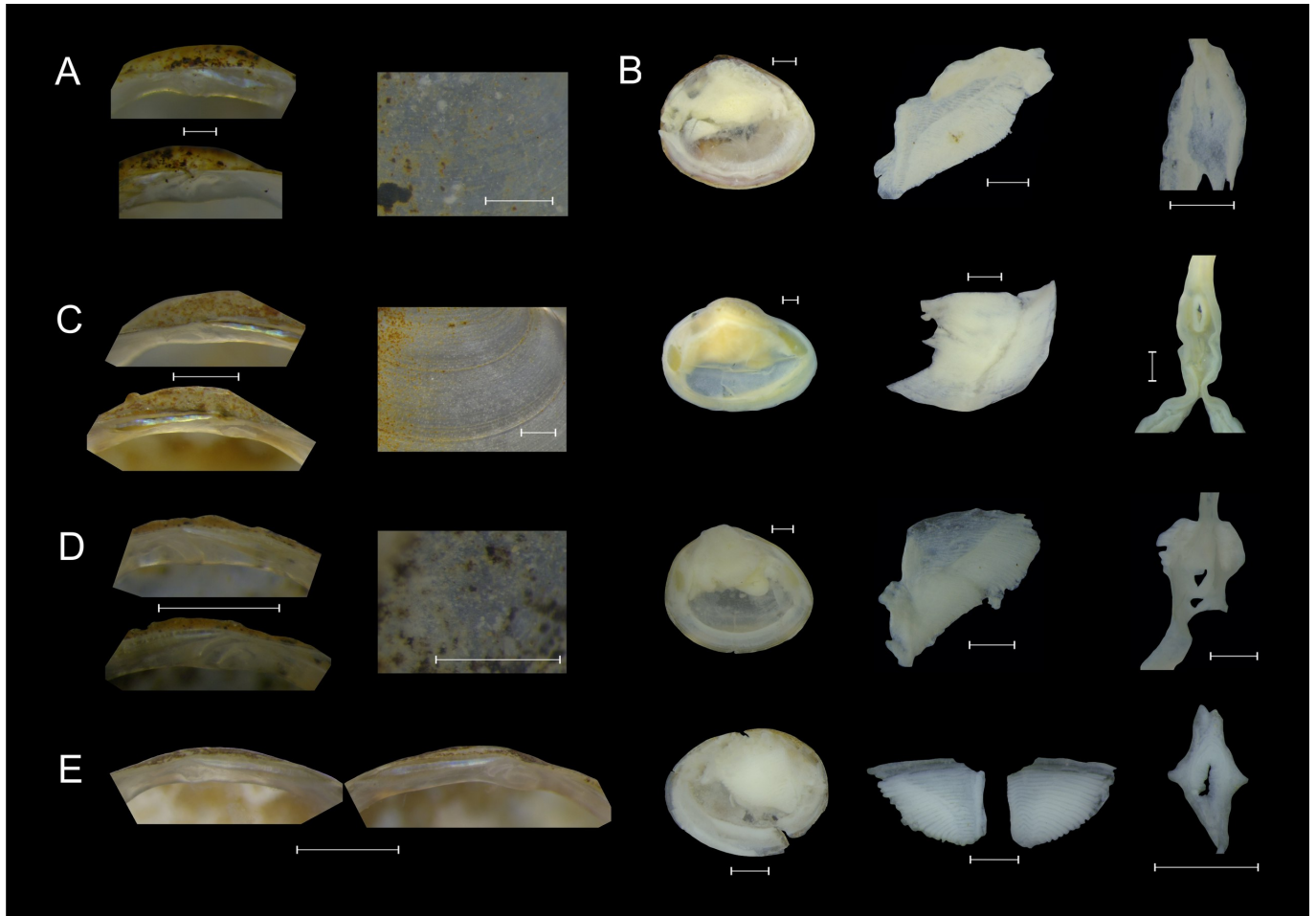
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On July 29, 2024, the Cooperation Agreements between the N.P. Laverov' Center and two universities from the Kingdom of Morocco — the [University of Sidi Mohammed ben Abdellah](#) (Fès) and [University of Mohamed the First](#) (Oujda) – come into force.



The priority area of cooperation is research on freshwater invertebrates, primarily mollusks, their endosymbionts, and parasites. The partners also plan to interact on issues related to the conservation of freshwater and marine wetlands, the assessment of biodiversity, the development and promotion of initiatives in the field of specially protected natural areas and waters, fisheries management, and coastal processes.

Coordinator of cooperation under the Agreement on the part of FECIAR UB RAS, Director of the Institute of Biogeography and Genetic Resources Yulia Bespalaya, said that the collaboration with Moroccan colleagues was started by joint work on the taxonomy, distribution, and evolutionary biogeography of an important group of bivalve mollusks of the subfamily Sphaeriinae based on data from around the world, including material from the African continent. Four species new to science were described, one of them from Morocco, *Euglesa moroccana* (Bespalaya, Vinarski, Aksenova, Mabrouki, Kondakov, Palatov, 2024). Currently, together with African colleagues, a new work is being prepared on the taxonomic revision of bivalves of the genus *Corbicula*.



Research on this topic is of great practical importance for aquaculture and fisheries, since representatives of Sphaeriinae play a key role in the flow of energy and nutrient cycling in aquatic ecosystems. Mollusks of this group are a food resource for organisms of higher trophic levels, including valuable fish species.

The goals and objectives of the new partnership of the Laverov Center are fully consistent with the provisions of the [Declaration of the Second Russia-Africa Summit](#) from July 28, 2023, and the [Action Plan of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum for 2023–2026](#) regarding such priorities as the development of joint research projects, academic exchanges, interaction on studying and combating climate change, drought, and desertification, and strengthening ties in the fields of agriculture and forestry, aquaculture, medicine, and parasitology. Cooperation between FECIAR UB RAS and universities in this country will serve to further strengthen Russian-Moroccan relations, whose history goes back almost 250 years.

Source: [The website of the Laverov Center](#)