



Tempus



## English as the Cornerstone of Sustainable Technology and Research



December 2015

Issue 8



We hope our European partners have had a very Merry Christmas and wish all a very Happy and Fruitful New Year!

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## End of the Year Greetings

As 2015 draws to a close, we are already geared up for the final and third year of ECOSTAR. It has been a busy and productive year with many activities taking place: two consortium meetings in Europe (Cyprus and the Netherlands); the first EMI workshop in Poland; and 3 assessment workshops given by European partners at 3 Israeli institutions. Now we are busy preparing for the EFL conference which will be held at Tel Aviv University in February with the active participation of ECOSTAR partners from Israel and from Europe. In this edition of the newsletter, we share with you updates on the activities which have taken place since the last newsletter, feedback on the field monitoring visit from our project advisor, and some tasters of what's coming up.

The efforts you are investing in this project are greatly appreciated, and are helping to propel us forward towards meeting ECOSTAR's goals. This coming year will be intensive as we implement the pilots and reach out to our colleagues beyond the project. I wish us all a productive and enjoyable year ahead and send season's greetings to all and warmest wishes for 2016.

*Linda Weinberg,*

*Project Coordinator*



## 4<sup>th</sup> Tempus ECOSTAR Consortium Meeting, hosted by The University of Maastricht, Sept 7-8, 2015.

The summer is an important time for many of the project partners, when their teaching duties are behind them and there is quality time to concentrate on their project commitments in a more relaxed manner.

Between the EMI workshops held at WUELS in Poland and the 4<sup>th</sup> consortium meeting held at UM in



CLIVE LAWRENCE – A VERY  
WARM WELCOME TO  
MAASTRICHT AND UM

Maastricht, a great deal of work on project deliverables was completed. The meeting began with a welcome by Peter Wilms van Kersbergen, head of the Language Centre, Ron Corvers, director of the International Center for Integrated Assessment and Sustainable Development (ICIS), and by Clive Lawrence, our convivial partner and host.

During the course of the 2-day meeting, the partners presented updates on the work packages and progress with the deliverables. Some of these are highlighted below.

Results of the **WP1** needs analysis survey showed that while reading is still considered important, the other language skills are considered equally, if not in some contexts, more important. The framework has been updated to incorporate the feedback from the review session in Cyprus. The need to decide on the English names for the Israeli courses was discussed and at the field monitoring meeting held after the consortium

meeting in September a decision was reached. The new names and equivalences are shown here in the table below:

New Israeli name	Current Israeli name	EU level
Pre-elementary 1 + 2	Trom besisi A and B	A1
Elementary	Basic	A2
Intermediate	Advanced 1	B1
Upper Intermediate	Advanced 2	B2

Following the successful **assessment** workshops held in Israel in June, Dr. Ruth Fortus of NITE agreed to develop pilot rubrics for writing, and to follow this up with speaking rubrics, applying the can-do statements from the new framework.

The **Train-the-Trainer** deliverables which began with the EMI workshops in Poland, also include a professional development program for implementation of the EFL/EAP framework. The discussions led to an updated outline for the program, and follow-up meetings were held at TAU in November and December to further develop the program. The format will include one face-to-face session followed by four online sessions. The initial face-to-face session will take place on the second day of the H-INET conference in Tel Aviv in February 2016.

Considerable progress is being made in **WP2** in the development of learning packages (LPs) for the different course levels, some of which were demonstrated for the partners. Piloting of these resources began in October. These LPs and the language learning OERs that are being compiled as part of **WP3** will all be made available as part of the ECOSTAR repository. Progress was also reported on development of the mobile language learning app.



SONIA MUNTEANU  
FROM TUC-N: SAMPLE  
LEARNING PACKAGES



BOB WILKINSON

The partners were very happy to welcome back Bob Wilkinson who gave a guest lecture entitled “Does internationalization promote multilingualism?” In this entertaining and informative talk, Bob addressed the concepts of both multilingualism and plurilingualism, clarifying the differences between them and how internationalization policy can actually lead to monolingualism.

The EMI course being developed in **WP4**, Introduction to “Sustainable Futures”, is also progressing, and the first pilot as a stand-alone course began in the fall semester. It will also be incorporated into the PDP being developed for EMI. Other partners to pilot in the spring semester.



THE PARTICIPATING PARTNERS IN THE  
4TH CONSORTIUM MEETING

#### Dates for your diaries:

1. **February 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> 2016:** International EFL conference: a 2-day conference for EFL teachers in higher education will be held at Tel Aviv University on February 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> 2016. The conference website (<http://h-inet.org/conference/>) provides up-to-date information and the conference committee is busy finalizing all the preparations.
2. **22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016 :** ECOSTAR’s 5<sup>th</sup> consortium meeting: this will be held in Cluj-Napoca in Romania –22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016 (to be confirmed shortly).
3. **October 2016:** The final consortium meeting will be held at OBC in Israel in October 2016 – the exact date will be confirmed soon.
4. **November 30<sup>th</sup> 2016:** The official end of the ECOSTAR project.

## 2nd Field Monitoring Visit

Dina Gallero from the National Erasmus+ Office in Jerusalem, visited OBC on September 17<sup>th</sup> 2015 to review progress in the project. Following a meeting with OBC's President, Professor Arie Maharshak, and project coordinator, Dr. Linda Weinberg, for a discussion about the project's goals and impact, partner representatives from OBC, TAU, IDC, OUI, IUCC presented the main achievements, as well as the remaining challenges, from the project's work packages.

(For more details, see the field monitoring visit PowerPoint which is available on the ECOSTAR website (<http://tempus-ecostar.iucc.ac.il/>) to discuss progress in the project.



SIGALIT LIVNAT AND ELI SHMUELI FROM IUCC, DINA GALLERO  
NATIONAL ERASMUS+ OFFICE JERUSALEM

At the end of the monitoring session, the project's partners took advantage of being in the same place to continue some of the discussions from Maastricht. The results of these discussions have been incorporated



ELANA SPECTOR-COHEN (TAU) PRESENTING WP1

into the official minutes from Maastricht as updates, and include the decision on English names for the Israeli courses, terms to be used relating to resources, and updates to the work plan for the coming months. This work plan has been shared with the partners in a Google doc for collaborative updates and to ensure all partners are up-to-date with work package activities.



FROM LEFT : LISA AMDUR (TAU) , DINA GALLERO (TEMPUS), MIRIAM SYMON (IDC), LINDA WEINBERG (OBC), SIGALIT LIVNAT (IUCC), JUDITH PRESSMAN (OBC), ELI SHMUELI (IUCC), MONICA BROIDO (IDC) ,LAUREN BERMAN (OBC) CARRIE YOMTOV (OUI), ELANA SPECTOR-COHEN (TAU), INGRID BARTH (OUI), JULIE ARBEL (OBC), SHAYA KAAS (OUI)



## Feedback from Brussels on Field Monitoring Visit

Feedback from Brussels was received on November 29<sup>th</sup> from the project's outgoing Project Adviser, Alba Chiara Tiberi in the following letter.

Dear Linda,

I would like to share with you and the project partners the main conclusions and results of the field monitoring visit carried by Dina and Kathrin, from the NEO in Israel at the Tel Aviv University on 17/09/2015.

We were actually very pleased to learn that the good progress, management and achievements so far could be further confirmed during the field monitoring visit. Here below the main conclusions from the monitoring:

- The ECOSTAR project objectives remain highly relevant to the academic landscape in Israel.
- The design of the project is clear, very well structured and understood by all partners in the consortium.
- Activities are running smoothly and almost according to the original plan, with only minor changes to the timeline.
- The management of the project has been conducted efficiently and the participation of all partners is very high which resulted in high quality deliverables.
- Dissemination activities have been done and many stakeholders are aware of the project and are interested in its outcome. That being said, we strongly recommend for further events to be held and an exploitation plan to be developed and implemented as soon as possible.
- The National Union of Israeli Students has proven to be a valuable partner in regard to giving feedback to the projects progress and bringing in the student's voice into the project which will assist in an easier implementation by Israeli students.
- Currently the impact of the project is largely witnessed on the entire HE system and less on the students. The project will begin piloting the courses during the upcoming semester which will then impact the students greatly.
- Management of all participating institutions is aware of the importance of the project and its outcomes which will assist its sustainability in the long run.
- The creation of the H-INET association is a very important spin-off of the project which gathers together all relevant stakeholders together in one association.

I would like to like to thank you again for the excellent work done by the partners in the implementation of the project. Please share this feedback with all the project beneficiaries.

I wish you the best of success in the continuation of your activities.

Kind regards,

Chiara

**ALBA CHIARA TIBERI** , Project Adviser

## New Project Adviser

Chiara has now finished her duties in Tempus. She will be working for the Inter-Africa Academic Mobility scheme in another unit of the Agency as of the beginning of December. Our new Project Adviser is Roísín McCabe. We thank Chiara and appreciate all of her support and assistance with ECOSTAR. A hearty welcome to Roísín with whom we have already been in contact on her first day on the job!

## H-INET:



One of the wider objectives of the ECOSTAR project (see page 91 of the proposal) is to professionalize the EFL field in Israel. Over the years, the higher education EFL teachers have been represented by three separate associations, UTEI for the universities, FACET for the academic colleges and the EAP Forum for the teacher training colleges. Following lengthy discussion, in August of this year, a meeting of representatives from each of these associations was held at Tel Aviv University and the decision was finally made to unite in an umbrella organization that would represent all EFL teachers in Israeli higher education. The name chosen for the association is Higher Education in Israel Network of English Teachers, with the acronym H-INET. A website has been established (<http://h-inet.org>) and the association already has more than 500 members. The association aims include promoting joint research, hold conferences, dealing with academic affairs and writing position papers on issues relating English language studies and generally empowering the English teaching community in Israel. Together with ECOSTAR, H-INET will be holding its first spring conference at Tel Aviv University in February 2016.

**H-INET Spring Conference:** under the auspices of H-INET and ECOSTAR, the 2-day conference will be held at Tel Aviv University on 8th and 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The conference themes include language classroom pedagogy, communication skills in EAP, language assessment, English medium instruction and innovations in technology for language learning and teaching. The conference will combine plenary sessions with workshops and parallel paper sessions as well as a panel of experts and the first H-INET AGM. The call for papers ends on January 15<sup>th</sup>.



PLANNING MEETING FOR DISSEMINATING RESOURCES TO  
TEACHERS AT H-INET SPRING CONFERENCE. LEFT TO RIGHT –  
SHAYA KASS, MONICA BROIDO, DANIEL PORTMAN & MIRIAM  
SYMOM, INGRID BARTH (NOT PICTURED)

## Work Package Updates:

**WP1:** The can-do statements which form the basis of the National Framework have been reviewed and revised, and will be presented at the H-INET spring conference in February. Assessment rubrics for speaking and writing assignments have been drawn up by Dr. Ruthy Fortus of NITE based on the framework and are ready for piloting. Preparations from the professional development program (PDP) for EFL teachers, spearheaded by Dr. Lisa Amdur and Professor Ofra Inbar of TAU, are in progress and the initial face-to-face session will take place at the H-INET conference in February. The online program sessions will continue during the spring semester.

**WP2:** The learning package exemplars for tasks and activities at the three main study levels are being completed and made ready for uploading to the ECOSTAR repository. They will be demonstrated at the H-INET conference in February.

**WP3:** Under the guidance of Dr. Ingrid Barth of OUI, curating of open educational language resources and the development of the ECOSTAR repository is progressing well. With the completion of the upgraded website, the repository will be presented to the EFL community at the H-INET conference in February.

**WP4:** Following intense work by Dr. Victoria Robinson of ULeic and with the assistance of Sigalit Livnat from IUCC, the **Sustainable Futures** course has been uploaded to the ECOSTAR website where a sample can be viewed. This course can be imported to institutions' home sites for those interested in using this as a stand-alone course – please be in touch with Sigalit ([sigalit@mail.iucc.ac.il](mailto:sigalit@mail.iucc.ac.il))

A pilot of the course is currently underway at OBC. An expert on fishing, Mrs. Evita Berman from Florida, joined the class as a guest speaker in early December for a discussion on issues relating to biodiversity and sustainable development. An introductory seminar on English Medium Instruction for academic staff will be held at OBC in January. This will be followed by a series of workshops run by OBC's EFL staff during the semester break to provide support according to individual need for lecturers who will be teaching in English in the spring semester.

**WP5:** The team at IUCC has been working hard to incorporate all the suggestions and requirements put forward by the partners into a new and upgraded website. This will present the project's deliverables in a professional and user-friendly environment which will be ready to present to the EFL community at the H-INET conference in February.

### General



SUSTAINABLE FUTURES COURSE ON THE  
ECOSTAR WEBSITE

## Focus on a partner: NITE The National Institute for Testing and Evaluation

### Background



The National Institute for Testing and Evaluation (NITE) was established in 1981 by the Associated Heads of the Universities in Israel in order to centralize the development and administration of admissions and placement tests. The founding of NITE made it possible to bring together leading professionals in the field of psychometrics and measurement with a view to enhancing the quality and efficiency of university admissions testing on a national scale. Since then, NITE has been instrumental in the university admissions process, providing a uniform testing program.

### Objectives

- The development and administration of standardized tests to be used for admissions and placement purposes by institutions of higher education.
- The provision of admissions and placement services for other institutions.
- Research and follow-up studies pertaining to the admissions and placement practices employed by institutions of higher education.
- The development of placement and assessment tools for the education system in general.
- The promotion of professional development in areas of testing, measurement and evaluation in Israel.

### Structure

NITE is a registered, public, non-profit organization. It is supervised by a board of directors that consists of representatives from all the universities. Members of NITE's staff are primarily professionals and researchers with advanced degrees and extensive experience in the field of psychometrics. They are complemented by a team of computer experts and administrative personnel.

NITE's activities are overseen by a scientific council comprised of leading professionals in the field from both Israel and abroad.

### The Testing Program

NITE's tests are administered to some 80,000 applicants to Israeli universities and other institutions of higher education each year. The testing process, handled in its entirety by NITE, includes:

- Registration of examinees. Assignment of test dates and locations in accordance with examinee preference.
- Supervision of the testing process.
- Screening of applicants with special needs (including physical disabilities and learning disorders) and provision of suitable test accommodations.
- Scoring and equating of tests; conversion of scores to a uniform scale and reporting them to institutions and examinees.

## **The Psychometric Entrance Test (PET)**

Israel is one of many countries in which psychometric testing is part of the university admissions process. The Psychometric Entrance Test (PET) consists of a battery of tests that assess a variety of abilities essential to academic performance. PET is used to rank university applicants according to the likelihood of their successfully completing academic studies. PET is administered five times a year, throughout Israel and in various locations abroad.

NITE has developed expertise in the translation of standardized tests so that most examinees can be tested in their first languages. Translated versions of PET are available in Arabic, Russian, French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, as well as a Combined Hebrew-English version with a multilingual glossary.

## **Proficiency Tests**

In addition to the Psychometric Entrance Test, NITE administers proficiency tests in a number of other areas:

- Proficiency Tests in Hebrew and English (AMIR and AMIRAM) – used by universities for admissions and for placement of applicants in language courses.
- Admissions Tests for various programs – designed to facilitate the admissions process for advanced degrees (e.g. in psychology), academic preparatory programs and certification programs (for example, nursing).

## **Testing of Special Skills and Non-Cognitive Factors**

NITE has developed tools for the assessment of special or non-cognitive skills required for a particular profession or academic field. These include:

- Standardized biographical questionnaires, designed as a uniform tool to replace the personal interview.
- Judgment and decision-making questionnaires, designed to examine the examinee's ability to assess complex situations and offer appropriate solutions.
- Writing assessment – designed to assess academic writing ability in the examinee's first language.
- MATAL – a computerized test battery for the diagnosis of learning disabilities in applicants to institutions of higher education, and in those who have already been accepted.
- Assessment Center – used for medical school admissions, this tool is designed to measure personal variables and includes questionnaires and simulation stations, the latter in both individual and group formats.

## **K-12 Tests for the Education System**

In addition to its ongoing activities, NITE has from time to time produced customized tests, some on request and some after having been awarded contracts. Among these are Israel's national assessment of educational progress tests, banks of performance tasks in elementary school science, mathematics and English; and the National Assessment Project, which was designed to provide information on academic performance at the school and classroom levels.

## Special Projects and Services

**Computerized Test:** NITE's ongoing work in the development of computerized adaptive testing is particularly advantageous for small populations with distinct needs. Computerized tests offered by NITE include: a psychometric practice test, an English proficiency test, and an adaptive psychometric test for examinees with learning disabilities.

Other projects include internet-based tests, and consultation and professional services, active in academic course instruction and workshops and in-service training program for various institutions.

## The Israeli Psychometric Association (ISPA)

NITE initiated the establishment of the Israeli Psychometric Association in order to promote local research and professional activity in educational and psychological measurement and to encourage professional contact, information sharing and cooperation among its members.

## International Activity

NITE is a member of many international organizations such as AERA, NCME, IAEA and ITC, and is involved in international projects in the field of educational assessment in several countries.

## Ongoing Research

NITE places great emphasis on research in the fields of psychometrics, measurement and assessment.

Research regarding PET's validity and its ability to predict academic success is conducted on a regular basis. Other aspects of PET are also studied, such as its suitability for different examinee populations and the effect of coaching on test performance.

Examinees are regularly asked for feedback on testing conditions and procedures.

## Publications and Information

Projects and research studies conducted, or participated in, by NITE are published in both professional journals and internal research reports.

## NITE AND ECOSTAR

These are the NITE people involved in ECOSTAR:



NAOMI GAFNI, DIRECTOR OF  
RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT



RUTH FORTUS, DIRECTOR OF  
TEST DEVELOPMENT



ELLIOT TURVALL,  
RESEARCHER &  
STATISTICIAN



Yael PERETZ, HEAD  
OF GRAPHICS



THE IN-HOUSE PRINTING AND  
PUBLISHING TEAM - EDMOND, YANIV,  
CLEMENTE HEADED BY EYAL BRIN

Hector Weissberger, Director of Finances (not pictured)



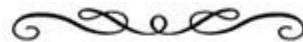
Since the ECOSTAR project began, NITE has worked with other partners to assess the relationship between the score scale currently used in Israel for placement into English language remedial courses (based on AMIR scores) and the CEFR score scale. NITE is also involved in the development of general rubrics to assess writing and speaking at various course levels, and in those sections of the program for the professional development of teachers that are related to assessment.

## New Tempus Logo

This is a reminder to please use the following on all of your communications and publications that involve the Tempus logo.



Co-funded by the  
Tempus Programme  
of the European Union



**Dear ECOSTAR partners,**

This is a reminder to please document your meetings with photos, and send us, in real-time, summaries, articles, research, news and references of interest, to be added to the website and included in the next newsletter.

In best support, and with best wishes for the  
New Year

Judy

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