

Seed Conservation Techniques International (Hybrid)

Online: 18-20/11/2025

In person: Drama, Greece

25-27/11/2025

Welcome to the **Seed Conservation Techniques International (SCTi)** course! This program is organized and coordinated by Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) Seed Bank. It is part of the Global Training Scheme, supervised by the Millennium Seed Bank (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew).

The course is designed to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of ex situ seed conservation, from initial collection and processing to long-term storage and viability monitoring. Through a combination of lectures, practical exercises, and fieldwork, participants will gain hands-on experience and a strong theoretical foundation in the essential techniques of seed banking, while having the opportunity to compare the practices applied in their institutes with the Millennium Seed Bank Partnership (MSBP) standard of seed conservation.

The course will be of hybrid format spanning 3 days of online lectures (18-20/11/2025) and 3 days practical exercises in the lab and in the field (25-27/11/2025). We are delighted to collaborate with Assistant Prof. Georgios Varsamis and Associate Prof. Spyros Tsiftsis of the Department of Natural Environment and Climate Resilience of the Democritus University of Thrace, where the course will be hosted. The department is located in the beautiful city of Drama, in North Greece. We look forward to a week of collaborative learning and knowledge exchange with colleagues from Drama and around the world.

Course Timetable

Day 1: 18/11/2025	ONLINE		
Time	Programme	Trainer	Module
09:00 – 09:20	Welcome to SCTi	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Introduction
09:20 – 10:20	Getting to know one another activity	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Introduction
10:20 – 10:40	Break		
10:40 – 11:30	Introduction to seed conservation	Prof. Emer. Kyriacos Georghiou	Introduction
11:30 – 12:20	Introductory basics of seed banking	Prof. Emer. Costas A. Thanos	Introduction

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12:20 – 13:20	Break		
13:20 - 14:40	Seed collecting planning and techniques	MSc. Apostolis Kaltsis	Collecting
14:40 - 15:00	Break		
15:00-15:40	Collecting strategy	Dr. Evangelia Daskalaku	Collecting
15:40-16:30	Collecting data	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Collecting
16:30-17:00	Collecting orchid seeds for ex situ conservation: In-situ practices	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Orchidaceae
17:00-17:10	Completing learning journal	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	MSBP Standards Reviews
Day 2: 19/11/2025	ONLINE		
Time	Programme	Trainer	Module
09:00 – 10:00	Principles of air-moisture relations and seed drying	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Collecting
10:00 – 10:20	Break		
10:20 – 11:00	Introduction to seed processing	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Processing
11:00 – 12:00	Seed longevity	Assist. Prof. Georgios Varsamis	Storage and duplication
12:00 - 13:00	Storage and duplication	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Storage and duplication
13:00 – 14:00	Break		
14:00 – 15:00	Germination and dormancy	Dr. Katerina Koutsovoulou	Collecting
15:00 – 15:10	Break		
15:10 - 15:40	Viability monitoring: setting up germination tests	Dr. Maria Doussi	Viability monitoring
15:40 – 16:10	Viability monitoring: evaluating germination tests	Dr. Maria Doussi	Viability monitoring
16:10 - 16:50	Orchid ex-situ seed processing	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Orchidaceae





16:45 – 17:00	Completing learning journal	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	MSBP Standards Reviews
Day 3: 20/11/2025	ONLINE		
Time	Programme	Trainer	Module
09:00 – 10:00	Data and database management	MSc. Sofoklis Mouratidis	Data management
10:00-11:00	Collections and seedbank management	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Seedbank management
11:00 – 11:30	Break		
11:30 – 12:30	Quiz	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Conclusion and assessment
12:30 - 13:15	MSBP Standards Reviews and formulating action plans	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	MSBP Standards Reviews
13:15 – 14:00	Break		
15:30 - 16:45	Schedule briefing for the in-Greece part of the course	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Introduction
14:30 - 15:00	Completing learning journal	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	MSBP Standards Reviews
15:00 – 16:00	End of online part of the course - and open discussion	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	
Day 4: 25/11/2025	Drama, Greece		
Time	Programme	Trainer	Module
09:00 – 10:00	Seed processing techniques: measuring eRH, cleaning, counting & cut-testing	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Processing
10:00 - 11:00	Viability monitoring: setting up germination and viability tests	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Viability monitoring
10:00 – 11:30	Break		
11:30 – 14:00	Viability monitoring: setting up germination and viability tests 2 (orchids)	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Viability monitoring
14:00 – 14:30	Open Discussion preparation for tomorrow	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	





Day 5: 26/11/2025	Drama, Greece		
Time	Programme	Trainer	Module
	Travel to field site		
09:00 – 11:00	Field work health & safety and planning	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Collecting
11:00 – 11:30	Break		
11:30 – 13:00	Identify target species and complete pre collection assessment	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Collecting
13:00 – 14:00	Break		
14:00 – 15:00	Seed collecting (data, seeds, and herbarium specimens)	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Collecting
15:00 – 15:30	Break and Travel		
15:30 – 16:15	Post harvest handling and measuring eRH	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Processing
16:15 – 16:45	Review of field day	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Collecting
16:45 – 17:00	Completing learning journal	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	MSBP Standards Reviews
Day 6: 27/11/2025	Drama, Greece		
Time	Programme	Trainer	Module
09:00 – 11:00	Seed processing techniques: measuring eRH, cleaning, counting & cut-testing	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Processing
11:00 – 11:30	Viability monitoring results discussion	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Storage and duplication
11:30 – 13:00	Break		
13:00 – 14:00	Open discussion forum and filling out feedback forms	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	Course administration
14:00 – 15:00	Course goodbye and certificates	Dr. Spyridon Oikonomidis	

Travel Information: Traveling to Drama, Greece

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Drama is located in northern Greece. The most convenient way to travel from abroad is to fly into one of the nearest international airports and then continue your journey to Drama.

Via Thessaloniki International Airport (SKG)

- **Airport Name:** Thessaloniki International Airport “Makedonia”
- **Location:** The airport is about 150 km from Drama.
- **From the Airport:** The most common option is to take a bus from the airport to the Thessaloniki Central Bus Station (KTEL). From there, you can catch a long-distance bus (KTEL) directly to Drama. The bus journey from Thessaloniki to Drama takes approximately 2 hours.

Bus Services to Drama (KTEL Bus) KTEL Drama provides regular bus connections from all major cities in Greece, including Thessaloniki and Athens. You can check the schedules and book tickets online at the official KTEL Drama website: <https://kteldramas.e-ticketing.gr/Pages/Destinations.aspx>.

The Bus Services to Drama have scheduled buses from Thessaloniki to Drama every two hours until 21:30 in the night but we recommend checking the availability of seats and the schedule before reaching Thessaloniki. If you plan to travel the same day you arrive in Greece (Thessaloniki) to Drama please take into account the time you will need upon arrival at the airport until you reach the KTEL Bus station we recommend to have at least two hours before your scheduled bus to Drama.

Accommodation Drama offers a range of hotels and guesthouses with prices ranging from 40-100 euros per night. We recommend booking your accommodation in advance.

What to bring

- Comfortable clothing for fieldwork
- Suitable footwear for fieldwork (e.g. boots)
- Suitable closed-toe footwear for lab work
- Clipboard (**not mandatory**)
- Seed collecting equipment e.g. hand lens, secateurs, GPS (**not mandatory**)
- Any Tiny Tag or other moisture measuring devices you are using (**not mandatory**)
- Lab coat if available
- Refillable water bottle
- USB/External hard-drive

Adapters for electrical plugs in Greece

In Greece the plug types are type C and type F, take that into account if you need to bring with you a plug adapter.

Weather during course (variable)

The weather in Drama during November can vary a lot with temperatures ranging from -1 to 20 °C so it is advised to bring with you both during the stay in the city and during the field work day on Mt. Falakro some changes of warm clothes

Course materials

During the partial part of the course all the available materials will be shared with you so please bring with you a USB/external hard-drive.

Participant expectations

On the first day we will ask participants to tell the group what their current role and responsibilities are. We will encourage participants to share their expectations for attending this training course, to find out what they hope to learn, and how this will help in their work.

Coverage and Outreach

We would appreciate it if you could share photos/stories from the training course afterwards by uploading them to a shared folder for internal and outreach use. In advance, we thank you all for your support. If you would prefer not to be filmed or photographed, please let us know at the beginning of the course or via e-mail at soikonomidis@biol.uoa.gr

For any additional information regarding travel or accommodation, please do not hesitate to contact us at soikonomidis@biol.uoa.gr. We are here to help make your journey as smooth as possible.

We look forward to welcoming you in Drama!

On behalf of the NKUA Seed Bank,

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