

Library of Desert Life' – Israel, Jordan build ties in Dead Sea study

Pioneering software for storing and analyzing biological information about the Dead Sea and

its desert environment, which will be linked to other biology data banks, is to be developed jointly by scientists from Israel, Jordan and the US.

The decision was agreed upon last week at a bioinformatics workshop held by the non-profit Bridging the Rift (BTR) Foundation at the Movenpick hotel on the Jordanian side of the Dead Sea.

The "Library of Life of The Desert" – which is intended to document all forms of life between the Dead Sea and the Red Sea – will serve as a proto-

type for the Library of the Middle East (LOME). The software, which will be developed under the auspices of the BTR project, will integrate the data collected and will make it accessible to scientists throughout the world.

The Jordanian delegation to the BTR workshop consisted of university heads, leading scientists and students. Among the American scientists who partici-

parted were Prof. Marcus Feldman, a respected biologist and director of Stanford University's Morison Institute, and Prof. Ron Elber, a leading computer scientist at Cornell University. Also participating were BTR Foundation president Mati Kochavi and Dr. Hani Mulki.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom and Jordan's Minister for For-

eign Affairs, Farouk Kasrawi sent letters of greetings to the workshop participants, praising scientific cooperation.

A BTR representative said growing interest has been shown by Jordanian and Israeli scientists in the foundation's work, which aims at realizing peace through development and investment in scientific cooperation.