



## D8.4

### COMMON POSITION PAPERS RESULTING FROM INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOPS 2



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## Executive Summary

This is the report from the international workshop concerning the current state of MIRRI. This will allow us to scope the progression toward the RI enlargement. Throughout this report, we explain the objectives and methodology of expansion. We also analyze the plans of work package 8 to integrate the new prospective members, critical risks, and the key performance indicators.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1. Introduction

WP8 concerns the Consolidation & Enlargement of Membership and Partnership of MIRRI, which is crucial for MIRRI's sustainability. For this reason, WP8 will implement a well-planned approach to increase the number of financially contributing countries engaged in the RI and to enlarge the mBRC and CC partner base. The underlying reasons for countries not willing to join MIRRI will be inquired and registered. This will allow the team to understand and analyze such motives and share experiences from engaged countries to better explain the advantages of becoming a MIRRI Member to attract them. A tailored plan on adapting MIRRI's offer to accommodating specific country requirements (e.g., the adaptation of services, among others) could also be considered. This will help bring on board in the long term the initially not committed countries..

This second deliverable report (M25-M42) on common position papers resulting from international workshops provides insights into membership and partnership issues with new mBRCs and Decision-Makers.

### 1.1. Objectives

WP8 (enlarging the membership of MIRRI) aims to consolidate the commitment of the Members that signed the MoU, to support and strengthen the existing Partners' collections, and to stimulate new engagements at all levels (Members, partners, and other stakeholders). For this, the task proposed within the frame of this WP is to promote the enlargement of membership, organization of activities aiming to integrate local/national collections, industrial engagement, and rising of decision-makers awareness.

The main objective of this D8.4 is to present the common position papers resulting from international workshops identifying areas for cooperation and increase in trust between research partners to ensure a successful implementation of the enlargement and consolidation plan, as the primary goal of the WP8.

### 1.2. Methodology

Due to the ongoing pandemic caused by COVID-19, many activities that required physical attendance, face-to-face meetings, and workshops were moved online. The limitations to travel and visiting personally interested collections and countries/intergovernmental organizations or participating in relevant meetings could have facilitated the networking and building of trust required to convince potential partners to join the RI. In addition, the Russian aggression on Ukraine at the beginning of 2022 and the following global crisis also had an impact on the actions within the project.



## **2. Common position papers resulting from international workshops 2**

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### 2.1. Workshops for Enlargement

Based on the work done in the previous months, we have continued the membership enlargement process and actively participated in different workshops, symposiums, and webinars organized between 2022-2023. MIRRI Partners participated in different workshops, webinars, and symposiums at the European and international levels.

On 22-23.06.2022, MIRRI Partner BCCM MUCL organized a Workshop on Access and benefit-Sharing (ABS), a Workshop on Biorisk assessment and implementation of Biorisk management at MIRRI mBRCs, and a Workshop on ISO 20387:2018: Biotechnology - Biobanking - General requirements for biobanking, which all took place in Louvain-La-Neuve, Brussels. The workshops were an excellent opportunity to approach the European Collections to discuss the possibility of cooperation, among which were representatives of the Czech Collection of Microorganisms (CCM) doc. RNDr. Pavel Švec, Ph.D. and Ing. Monika Laichmanová, Ph.D. Curator of filamentous fungi and yeasts.

During the ECCO XL Conference, which took place 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2022 in Braunschweig, Germany, the IS-MIRRI21 partners had the possibility to meet with representatives from other collections and discuss the MIRRI's Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda (SRIA) and how future research, innovation, and market opportunities can be anticipated through the project's strategic areas and further mapped under the Horizon Europe clusters on Health, Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment. Particular emphasis was put on the German collection DSMZ, which organized the ECCO 2022 meeting.

Since the beginning of the project implementation, the Coordinator of WP8 has been in constant contact and has been exchanging correspondence and relevant information as well as documentation with the Ministry of Education and Science of Poland, a public body responsible for the decision on the national level on Poland accession to the MIRRI Consortium. We have organized 2 online workshops with the Advisory Committee of the Ministry, which comprises advisors affiliated with academia, research, and public administration units. The workshops were followed up by an extensive documentation explaining in detail the conditions, benefits, and requirements for Poland to join MIRRI. The documents also included responses and feedback to numerous questions posed by the Advisory Committee. The decision-making process is now in its final stage, and we expect to receive the decision by the end of July.

In February 2023, the Coordinator of the WP8 held a dissemination meeting with the Director of the Association of Biotechnology Companies BioForum. BioForum comprises members and partners from the sectors of biotechnology and medicine from Poland and the EU, e.g., Baker McKenzie.



Its goals on the European level are:

- Representation of the biotechnological environment.
- Supporting members of the Union in the process of registration and production of biotechnological products in the European Union.
- Developing permanent contacts and exchange of information between members of the Union.

Association of Biotechnology Companies BioForum owns the CEBioForum brand. This internationally renowned event is a networking platform between Polish and foreign entities for long-term development and cooperation. The outreach of the CEBioForum is quite significant, the conference attracts around 400 participants from various countries. The BioForum Management will be approached and asked to include a dedicated session or lecture on MIRRI in the event's next edition.

During the meeting with the management of BioForum, the activity of the MIRRI-ERIC as well as the objectives of IS\_MIRRI21, were presented. The informational materials were disseminated among the management of the Association.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> of March 2023, an IAFB representative (Ms. Joanna Bucka-Kolendo and Ms. Agata Wierzbińska) on behalf of MIRRI took part in the BIOEAST Congress, which took place in Warsaw, Poland. The congress aimed to present a newly developed macroregional Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (BIOEAST SRIA) and 11 bioeconomy concept papers developed based on assessing the eleven BIOEAST countries' bioeconomies. During this event, we connected with Ms. Vesna Neskovic, the International Relations Officer - EU project manager from Novi Sad, Serbia, on the possibility of Serbia joining MIRRI-ERIC. Representatives of IAFB involved in the realization of the WP8 are in constant contact with Ms. Neskovic. The offer has been made to organize a workshop in Warsaw for the Ministry of Science, Technological Development, and Innovation representatives, and we expect to organize it by the end of July. If not possible, the contact with Serbia and the Ministry will be sustained after the project's closing to enable the extension of the Consortium in the later period.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2023, Joanna Bucka-Kolendo participated in the CBE JU Info Days 2023 (Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking), which were organized in Brussels at the premises of the European Commission. The event was an opportunity to gain insights into the upcoming CBE JU call 2023 and for networking opportunities with institutions from the European academia, research, industry, and policy bodies.

During the whole day meeting, matchmaking sessions were organized with the representatives of institutions from the majority of the EU and associate countries. Ms. Bucka-Kolendo was present at the Info Days event to explore the possibilities of enlarging the membership and geographical distribution of MIRRI-ERIC. She held several meetings, inter alia with the

representatives of Luxembourg and Turkey, with regard to the potential membership of these countries in the MIRRI Consortium.

The representative from Luxembourg with whom Ms. Bucka-Kolendo had a preliminary discussion, Mr. Fabian Belin, was affiliated with the Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology (LIST). The LIST is a RTO (Research and Technology Organisation) that develops advanced technologies and delivers innovative products and services to industry and society, active in various research areas, e.g., agriculture and viticulture. As Luxembourg is a small country with easy networking and quite a tight research environment, the colleague from Luxembourg mentioned the possibility of facilitating contacts with the Luxembourg Society for Microbiology. Following the meeting, an e-mail was sent to Mr. Fabian Belin with further details on MIRRI membership options.

A meeting was also held with Ms. Betul Ozturk from the Izmir University of Economy to discuss the potential membership of Turkey in the MIRRI-ERIC. Ms. Ozturk was also contacted after the meeting to provide her with more details and to ask her to set up a meeting with the policy-makers in Turkey. We contacted the Turkish Society of Microbiology to intensify and facilitate the accession process.



Figure 1 Joanna Bucka-Kolendo and Betul Ozturk: Enlargement Meeting in Izmir, Turkey

From 16<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> May 2023, Ms. Joanna Bucka-Kolendo participated in Slovakia's 47th Annual Conference on Yeasts (Figure 2). The Institute of Chemistry, Slovak Academy of Sciences, organized the event, collaborating with the Faculty of Chemical and Food Technology, Slovak University of Technology.



Figure 2 Bucka-Kolendo representing MIRRI-ERIC and IS\_MIRRI21 Consortium in Smolenice, Slovakia

The participants represented mainly European countries, but most of them were Slovaks. Participation in the event was important as it allowed the establishment of many professional contacts with the Slovak Academy of Sciences representatives, who expressed their interest in joining the MIRRI Consortium. They are also in close contact with the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and will be willing to facilitate contacts with the policymakers.

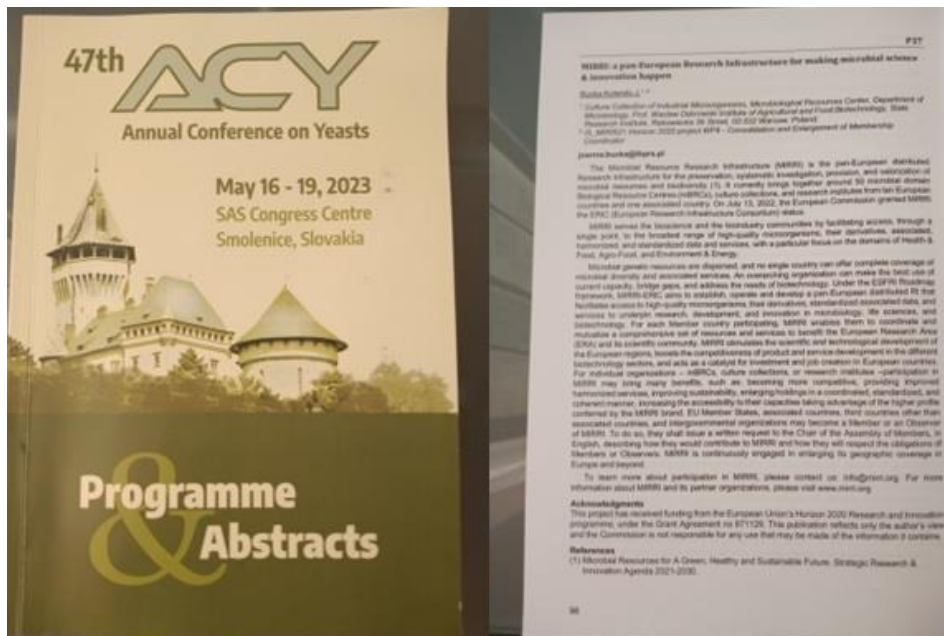


Figure 3 Annual Conference on Yeasts, Slovakia

Moreover, MIRRI was promoted among the conference participants during a dedicated poster session (Figure 3) with the poster entitled: “MIRRI: a pan-European Research Infrastructure for making microbial science & innovation happen”.

## 2.2. International Conferences for the promotion of MIRRI-ERIC

### 2.2.1. ISBER Annual Meeting in Seattle, USA, 3-6 May 2023

Under the same motto, “MIRRI: a pan-European Research Infrastructure for making microbial science & innovation happen”, Raquel Hurtado-Ortiz from Institut Pasteur, on behalf of IS\_MIRRI21 Consortium and MIRRI-ERIC, promoted MIRRI-ERIC while taking part in the International Society for Biological and Environmental Repositories Annual Meeting in Seattle, 3-6 May 2023. An abstract co-authored by Rosa Aznar, Marleen Bosschaerts, Nelson Lima, Luis Soares and the MIRRI Consortium was submitted to the meeting highlighting the theme “Come as you are: Building Biobanking Bridges”.



Figure 4 Raquel Hurtado-Ortiz in ISBER Annual Meeting

Raquel Hurtado-Ortiz contributed to Session 2 (Figure 5), chaired by Rosy Singh and Birendra Kumar Yadav. The meeting, in general, offered an opportunity for networking with top institutions in the field of Biobanking and relevant areas.




| ABRIDGED PROGRAM   |   |  <b>isber 2023</b> MAY 3-6<br>SEATTLE, USA<br>Annual Meeting Hybrid |                         |
|--|---|--|-------------------------|
| THURSDAY, MAY 4, 2023  |   |  |                         |
| 4:00pm – 5:30pm<br>(Concurrent)  | <b>CONTRIBUTED PAPER SESSION 1</b>  |  | Grand Ballroom III      |
|  | <b>Co-Chairs:</b> Cassandra Griffin, Vanessa Tumilasci<br><b>Accelerating Translational Research by Enabling Access to Specimens and Datasets</b><br>Snehal Joshi, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, USA                          |  |                         |
|  | <b>Power of Consortium Shared Resources when External Threats Occur</b><br>Susan Hume, Victorian Cancer Biobank Consortium; Eastern Health, Australia   |  |                         |
|  | <b>A New Tool to Match Organ, Tissue and Eye Post-Mortem Donors to Research Project Criteria</b><br>Kaitlyn Kunkle, Advancing Sight Network, USA  |  |                         |
|  | <b>Determining Pre-Analytical Variables and Molecular Determinants to Ensure High Quality of Luxor Biobank</b><br>Nashwa Kordy, Shefa Al Orman Hospital, Egypt  |  |                         |
|  | <b>Biobanking During War: Experience of Audubon Bioscience</b><br>Alexandra Giardina, Audubon Bioscience, USA   |  |                         |
|  | <b>Survey of Adolescents Regarding Their Opinion of Research and Vaccination During the COVID-19 Pandemic</b><br>Qudrat Aujla, BC Children's Hospital, Canada   |  |                         |
| 4:00pm – 5:30pm<br>(Concurrent)  | <b>CONTRIBUTED PAPER SESSION 2</b>  |  | Cascade Ballroom I & II |
|  | <b>Co-Chairs:</b> Rosy Singh, Birendra Kumar Yadav<br><b>MIRRI-ERIC: A Pan-European Research Infrastructure for Making Microbial Science and Innovation Happen</b><br>Raquel Hurtado-Ortiz, MIRRI-ERIC, France                          |  |                         |
|  | <b>Developing Genomic and Biomaterials Resources for Establishing Non-human Primate Models of Human Disease</b><br>Eric Vallender, The University of Mississippi Medical Center; Tulane National Primate Research Center, USA           |  |                         |
|  | <b>AI in Medicine Based on Biobank Data - New Opportunities and (Not) Known Risks</b><br>Karine Sargsyan, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, USA  |  |                         |
|  | <b>An Ethico-Legal Analysis of Broad Consent for Biobank Research in South Africa: Towards an Enabling Framework</b><br>Mantombi Maseme, National Health Laboratory Service; University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg, South Africa |  |                         |
| 5:30pm – 7:00pm  | <b>Challenges and Opportunities for mBRCs in the Era of Regulated Access Policies</b><br>Raquel Hurtado-Ortiz, Institut Pasteur, France   |  |                         |
|  | <b>How Can and Should Biobanking Governance Structures Respond to (Inter)national Political Contexts?</b><br>Rachel Thompson, University of Oxford, United Kingdom  |  |                         |
| <b>Exhibitor and Poster Networking Evening</b>   |   | Grand Ballroom I & II and Fifth Avenue Room  |                         |
| Join us for refreshments and hors d'oeuvres in the exhibit hall while networking with colleagues and exhibitors and perusing the abstract posters. Poster presenters will be at their posters in the Fifth Avenue Room from 6:00pm – 7:00pm. |   |  |                         |

Figure 5 ISBER Program

### 2.2.2. PYFF8, 5-8 June 2023, Cork-Ireland

Jean-Luc Legras from INRAE-France represented IS\_MIRRI21 Consortium and MIRRI-ERIC in the 8th Conference on Physiology of Yeasts & Filamentous Fungi that took place in Cork, Ireland between the 5th and 8th of June 2023.



Figure 6 PYFF8 Conference

During his presentation, Jean-Luc Legras discussed “The IS\_MIRRI21 H2020 Project: Implementing the MIRRI-ERIC” (see abstract below) in order to promote the RI and attract new partners for enlargement and support, establishing contacts with key players in the field of yeasts and fungi.

## The IS\_MIRRI21 H2020 Project: Implementing the MIRRI-ERIC

Legras J<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Lima N<sup>4</sup>, Soares L<sup>5</sup>, Aznar R<sup>6</sup>, BOSSCHAERTS M<sup>7</sup>, IS\_MIRRI21 Consortium<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup>SPO, University of Montpellier, <sup>2</sup>INRAE, <sup>3</sup>Institut Agro Montpellier, <sup>4</sup>Micoteca da Universidade do Minho, <sup>5</sup>MIRRI, <sup>6</sup>CECT, University of Valencia, <sup>7</sup>BELSPO, <sup>8</sup>MIRRI

The IS\_MIRRI21 project running from 2020-2023 aims to implement the Microbial Resource Research Infrastructure (MIRRI) and secure its long-term sustainability. The mission of MIRRI is to serve Bioscience and Bioindustry by providing (a) a broad range of high-quality biological resources and associated data, (b) long-term sustainability of microbial biodiversity, and (c) knowledge and professional development. This mission will be achieved by offering users from academia, governmental laboratories and the private sector access to a portfolio of microbial Biological Resource Centres’ (mBRC’s), services, expertise, education and training build-up and synergistically on the top of mBRC’s proficiencies. To accelerate innovative research processes in life sciences and biotechnology using microorganisms, or their derivatives, IS\_MIRRI21 has set up MIRRI’s single-entry point portal to promote its services, resources, expertise and knowledge transfer activities, as well as to provide access to partners’ resource associated data made interoperable for data searching and data mining. The continuously increasing knowledge will be transferred to users via expert clusters (e.g., for legal framework, for biosecurity, to support training and education programs, information and cut edge technology, etc.). It will promote cross-disciplinary and innovative solutions (industry and academic) research collaboration through the transnational access offer in different microbial topics defined in pipeline services. With this project, MIRRI has become an ERIC in June 2022, and is a ‘Landmark’ in the Health & Food domain of the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) Roadmap. It is still working to consolidate its operation and enlarge the membership and European coverage and beyond.

Figure 7 Abstract by IS\_MIRRI21 and MIRRI-ERIC, presented by Jean-Luc Legras

## 3. Conclusion



### 3. Conclusion

Referring to the main tasks proposed in the framework of the WP8, the present report of D8.4 undoubtedly shows that during the reporting period of two years, much has been achieved, especially in the exploration of the possibilities of enlarging the membership and geographical distribution of MIRRI-ERIC. In accordance with the EU required policy, it is important to enlarge its interface beyond the EU while developing a research infrastructure. MIRRI's participation in several international workshops and face-to-face meetings is of great importance as participants of such events are different institutions, including CCs, governmental and Networks representatives, and parties potentially interested in MIRRI. In addition, feedback from these international workshops confirmed that approaching Microbiology-related Scientific Societies is a strategy to engage them in promoting MIRRI at the national level, thus paving the way to bring the country as MIRRI member.

The conclusions drawn from the workshops organized with the policy-makers and the representatives of public administration from Serbia, Turkey, and Poland point to several important obstacles with regard to the MIRRI membership, which must be reviewed and tackled in the future by the MIRRI-ERIC Assembly of Members.

One of the most compelling issues is a relatively low visibility and awareness of the importance of microbiology R&D potential. While the academic and research communities are very much aware of the growth potential that the microbiology research offers, the policy-makers and the representatives of public administration seem to be insufficiently informed about the opportunities which stem from investments in this area. It is important to focus more on awareness building among all relevant stakeholders, through dedicated dissemination or informative events or regular face-to-face meetings with the representatives of governmental institutions.

It is advisable to secure proper geodiversity with regard to MIRRI members and achieve as full geographical coverage as possible. Some countries that own vast and important collections and would constitute a solid asset for MIRRI-ERIC often have unstable economies and suffer from currency fluctuations, which generates severe problems with affordability to pay the annual membership fee. There is a need to find effective mitigation schemes against this issue. Perhaps a one-year fee waiver or a discount on the first 2 years of membership could be introduced for those countries whose economical situation is volatile, but their membership in MIRRI is of important role.

Last but not least, staff deficiency is also one of the problems many institutions have been facing for a long time. The most compelling are shrinking human resources, work overload, or even poor linguistic competencies. It would be advisable to include in the institution's annual budget a full-time salary or a monthly bonus for the person involved in the work for MIRRI-ERIC to encourage staff to get involved in the cooperation within MIRRI-ERIC Consortium.



Despite the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions and further repercussions associated with the geopolitical disturbance, communication with several EU countries' representatives regarding the MIRRI membership has been very successful.

Finally, we assume that even though the project IS\_MIRRI21 is ending, the effort to enlarge and integrate new members in MIRRI-ERIC structures will proceed.



# MIRRI IS21

IMPLEMENTATION AND  
SUSTAINABILITY FOR  
THE 21ST CENTURY

MICROBIAL RESOURCE RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE