



D8.6

Second Report on the New Prospect Members in MIRRI



The project "Implementation & Sustainability of Microbial Resource Research Infrastructure for 21st Century" (IS_MIRRI21) has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement n° 871129. This document reflects only the author's view and the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Project number:	871129
Project acronym:	IS_MIRRI21
Project title:	Implementation & Sustainability of Microbial Resource Research Infrastructure for XXI Century
Start date of the project:	1 st February 2020
Duration:	42 Months
Programme:	H2020/Research and Innovation Actions: INFRADEV-03-2019

Deliverable type:	O
Deliverable reference number:	D8.4
Work package:	WP8
Due date:	July 2023 – M42
Actual submission date:	

Responsible organisation:	IBPRS		
Editor:	Joanna Bucka-Kolendo		
Version:	Revised by:	Date:	Notes:
v1.0	Joanna Bucka-Kolendo	17/07/2023	1 st Draft
v1.1	Giancarlo Perrone	26/07/2023	Internal Reviewer 1
v1.2	Bassem Kheireddine	26/07/2023	Internal Reviewer 2
v1.3	Joanna Bucka-Kolendo	28/07/2023	Editing
V1.4	PSC	31/07/2023	voting
V2.0	Nelson Lima	10/08/2023	Submission

Abstract:	Report about the engagement and enlargement of new prospect members at the end of the project.
Keywords:	Decision-makers, MIRRI group, national/international representatives, new mBRCs

Dissemination level:	Public	X
	Confidential (for the Consortium and EU Commission Services only)	

Executive Summary

This is the second report on the new prospective members of MIRRI-ERIC. 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.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Objectives.....	1
1.2. Methodology.....	1
2. Second report on the new prospective members of MIRRI	3
3. Conclusion.....	9

List of Figures

Figure 1 Latin America-Europe Symposium on Research Infrastructures RI-VIS	3
Figure 2 Joanna Bucka-Kolendo participated in Slovakia's 47th Annual Conference on Yeasts. 6	
Figure 3 Bucka-Kolendo and Wierzbińska meeting with Turkish Representatives at Istanbul University, Turkey.....	7



1. Introduction

1. Introduction

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

This second deliverable report (M25-M42) of the new prospective members of MIRRI-ERIC provides insights into membership and partnership issues with new mBRCs and Decision-Makers.

1.1. Objectives

Work Package 8, enlarging the membership of MIRRI-ERIC, aims to consolidate the members' commitment that signed the MoU, support and strengthen the existing Partners' collections, and stimulate new engagements at all levels (Members, partners, and other stakeholders). For this, the task proposed in 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 D8.6 Second Report on the New Prospect Members in MIRRI-ERIC is to present the activities and engagements on the enlargement of new prospective members at the end of the project.

The report identifies areas for cooperation and increased 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 pandemic caused by COVID-19, many activities that required physical attendance, face-to-face meetings, and workshops were moved online. The limitations to travel, especially in the first two years of the project, had a negative impact on the enlargement efforts. Visiting in-person 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. Besides, the Russian aggression on Ukraine at the beginning of 2022 and the following global crisis had an impact on the actions within the project.



2. SECOND REPORT ON THE NEW PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS OF MIRRI

2. Second report on the new prospective members of MIRRI

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

On 15th and 17th June 2021, IS_MIRRI21 Partners co-ordinated IS_MIRRI21 Latin America-Europe Symposium on Research Infrastructures RI-VIS (Figure 1). The event aimed to widen MIRRI-ERIC's outreach and boost its impact in the research and innovation sector by showcasing its unique added value to potential users and partners from Europe and Latin America. As a result, a Letter of Interest from the Chilean Network of Microbial Culture Collections (RCCCM, an acronym in Spanish), which currently comprises 9 CC covering the geographic territory, was received, expressing interest in becoming a MIRRI-ERIC member. We have started to explore the possibility of having connections with Brazil, not directly with the Federal Government of Brazil, but with the State Governments, namely, with their funding agencies for research (Fundações de Amparo à Pesquisa - FAPs), since some of them have already expressed their interest to be connected with MIRRI-ERIC activities. It was reported in the First Project Report. In the following months, the IS_MIRRI21 Coordinator, Prof. Nelson Lima, continued the face-to-face meetings with the Brazilian and Chilean Collections. So far, the processes of partnerships with the two countries will be long and require political decisions.



Figure 1 Latin America-Europe Symposium on Research Infrastructures RI-VIS

On the 24th of September 2021, the 39th Annual Meeting of the European Culture Collections Organisation ECCO AGM Meeting took place. ECCO annual meetings are a valuable forum for discussion and innovation on the future development of member collection activities. The meetings aim to promote collaboration and exchange ideas and information about all aspects of

culture collections activities. During the online meeting (<http://www.eccosite.org>), the declaration from the Culture Collection of Algae, Gottingen, Germany (SAG) was obtained that they are interested in collaborating with MIRRI-ERIC. Therefore, MIRRI-ERIC partners contacted SAG representatives and their country representatives and proposed a meeting, however, with no response from their side, which was reported in D1.4 (Second General Annual Report 24).

During the ECCO XL Conference, which took place 27th – 29th of September 2022 in Braunschweig, Germany, the IS-MIRRI21 partners had the possibility to meet with the representatives from other collections and discuss the MIRRI-ERIC'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. The emphasis was put on the German collection DSMZ, which also 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's accession to the MIRRI-ERIC Consortium. IAFB has been meeting with the Advisory Committee of the Ministry, which comprises advisors affiliated with academia, research, and public administration units. The meetings were followed up by an extensive documentation explaining the conditions, benefits, and requirements for Poland to join MIRRI-ERIC. The documents also included responses and feedback to numerous questions posed by the Advisory Committee. We also conducted meetings with vice ministers (Prof. Włodzimierz Bernacki, Secretary of State, Government Plenipotentiary for monitoring the implementation of the reform of higher education and science) and policy decision-makers. The decision-making process is now in its final stage, and we expect to receive the decision shortly. We are making all efforts to ensure that Poland is among the MIRRI-ERIC members.

During the General Assembly meetings from 13th to 16th December 2022, the Advisory Board representative Dr. Lene Lange from Denmark, expressed an interest in Denmark joining MIRRI-ERIC. As a follow-up, more detailed information with fee calculation for the country, and the information on all the projects that MIRRI-ERIC is engaged in, was sent to Dr. Lange to deliver to the authority and policymakers in Denmark. We are waiting for the feedback.

On the 15th -16th of March 2023, an IAFB representative (Dr. Eng Joanna Bucka-Kolendo and Ms. Agata Wierzińska) on behalf of MIRRI-ERIC 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 the University of Novi Sad, Serbia, on the possibility of Serbia joining MIRRI-ERIC. Ms. Neskovic has direct contact with the Minister of Science, Technological Development and Innovation, Ms. Jelena Begovic, whose scientific background is molecular biology. Ms. Begovic is also the creator of the BIO4 Campus Project, which will gather research entrepreneurs and companies to develop the biomedicine and biotechnology sector in Serbia. The Ministry is interested in Serbia becoming part of MIRRI-ERIC and might consider the BIO4 Campus project and its location in Belgrade as the potential national node. The information provided by IAFB on MIRRI-ERIC has been sent out from the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation to the related R&D institutes in Serbia, and the feedback is now being collected. IAFB is in regular contact with Ms. Neskovic on the progress of the decisions. The offer has been made to organize a workshop in Warsaw for the Ministry of Science, Technological Development, and Innovation representatives. If not possible, the contact with Serbia and the Ministry will be sustained after the project's closing by MIRRI-ERIC to enable the extension of the Consortium in the later period. Representatives of IAFB involved in the realization of the WP8 are in constant contact with Ms. Neskovic.

As a result of CBE JU Info Days 2023 (Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking), which were organized in Brussels at the premises of the European Commission on the 20th of April 2023, the possibilities of enlarging the membership and geographical distribution of MIRRI-ERIC was presented by Dr. Eng Bucka-Kolendo. Several meetings were held, inter alia, with the representatives of Luxembourg and Turkey, with regard to the potential membership of these countries in the MIRRI-ERIC RI, which was reported in Deliverable D8.4.

In May 2023, Dr. Eng 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 in collaboration with the Faculty of Chemical and Food Technology, Slovak University of Technology. The participants represented mainly European countries, but most of them were Slovaks. Participation in the event was important as it allowed for establishing many professional contacts with the Slovak Academy of Sciences representatives, who expressed their interest in joining the MIRRI-ERIC. They are also in close contact with the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and are willing to facilitate contact with policymakers. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport considers MIRRI-ERIC important and valuable for Slovakia, and the Membership fees for MIRRI-ERIC should be included in the next year's (2024) ministry budget. Moreover, MIRRI-ERIC was promoted among the conference participants during a dedicated poster session with the poster entitled: "MIRRI: a pan-European Research Infrastructure for making microbial science & innovation happen".



Figure 2 Joanna Bucka-Kolendo participated in Slovakia's 47th Annual Conference on Yeasts.

As a result of the CBE JU Info Days 2023, contacts with Turkish researchers and policymakers were established. The meetings were held in July at the Istanbul University, Istanbul Faculty of Medicine, Department of Clinical Microbiology. The meetings were attended by the Vice-Rector of the University Prof. Dr. Mustafa Oral Oncul, and Prof. Dr. Zerrin Aktaş. Prof. Dr. Aktaş presented the KÜKENS Culture Collections Research Center and the Department of Clinical Microbiology research staff with Dr. Eng Joanna Bucka-Kolendo and Ms. Agata Wierzbńska, WP8 IS_MIRRI21 representatives (figure 3).

KÜKENS Collection was founded in 1979 and owns the bacteria isolated from Turkey and the various microorganisms brought from different culture centers around the World. KÜKENS is a member of the World Culture Collection Federation (WFCC) and ECCO (European Culture Collections' Organisation). KÜKENS Culture Collections Research Center has rich microbiological resources with epidemiological and clinical importance for Turkey, consisting of standard and reference bacteria stems and microorganisms used for training purposes and researches and to produce various biological agents. There are about 906 bacteria and 140 yeast organisms in the Collection. It has been conserving standard microorganism cultures, providing culture demands for the researchers in our country, exploring and making diagnoses for the newly isolated species, saving the deposit cultures, researching food locations for the microorganism isolation and diagnosis, and following the developments in Europe and the other countries in the world, and various similar studies.

During the meetings, the activities of the KÜKENS Collection, which is part of the Istanbul University, were presented, and preliminary talks on Turkey's membership in the MIRRI-ERIC were held with Prof. Dr. Mustafa Oral ÖNCÜL, who expressed willingness to join MIRRI-ERIC and assured that they would discuss the process with the Turkish policy-makers. It was proposed

that the next step will be a return visit of the delegation from Istanbul University to Poland or Portugal or an online meeting, with the participation of the MIRRI-ERIC AoM, to take further steps regarding Turkey's accession to MIRRI-ERIC. We offered assistance in the process of joining the MIRRI-ERIC.



Figure 3 Bucka-Kolendo and Wierzbińska meeting with Turkish Representatives at Istanbul University, Turkey

Attempts have been made to contact several other countries' representatives:

Sweden: positive contacts with Ed Moore (CCUG).

Germany: contact with DSMZ representatives was made during the ICC15 Conference in June 2023. Further contacts are to be made.

Moldova: National Collection of Non-Pathogenic Microorganisms (CNMN) aims to become part of MIRRI-ERIC; thus, key contacts are to be identified.

Iceland: contacts with the Icelandic Strain Collection and Records and their representatives Prof. Viggo Þ. Marteinsson, a curator of the collection, and Ms. Alexandra Klonowski, a project manager, have been made, and we currently await the response.

Luxembourg: contact has been made with Mr. Fabian Belin and Mr. Henry Michel Cauchie, Head of the Environmental Microbiology and Biotechnology Research Group from the Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology (LIST).

3. Conclusion



3. Conclusion

Referring to the main tasks proposed in the framework of the WP8, the present report, D8.4 Implementation & Sustainability of Microbial Resource Research Infrastructure for XXI Century, undoubtedly shows that during the 2nd and final 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 research infrastructure. MIRRI-ERIC's participation in several face-to-face meetings, international workshops, and symposia are of great importance as beneficiaries of such events are different institutions, including CCs, governmental and network representatives, and parties potentially interested in MIRRI-ERIC, like Brazil and Chile. These two non-European members will bring to the RI an important asset as they represent essential hotspots of microbial diversity: only Brazil represent about 23% of the total biodiversity on the Earth, and Chile has critical extreme ecological habitats, both possess important data and information related to these holdings. The scientific merits for all parties are guaranteed, and we look forward to political support.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic repercussions, communication with several EU countries' representatives regarding the MIRRI-ERIC membership has been successful. Even though the project IS_MIRRI21 is ending, the enlargement effort for new members in MIRRI-ERIC will continue.



MIRRI IS21

IMPLEMENTATION AND
SUSTAINABILITY FOR
THE 21ST CENTURY

MICROBIAL RESOURCE RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE