



First report of the Advisory Board (AB) and Ethical Board (EB)

Deliverable 1.5



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Abstract

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1. Introduction

1. Introduction

This first report of the Advisory Board (AB), and of the Ethical Board (EB) includes communications and interactions with the AB and EB on different occasions, such as the kick-off meeting, a meeting between the AB and the IS_MIRRI21 Coordinator, a meeting between the EB, the MIRRI CCU (Central Coordinating Unit / Management Backoffice) and the IS_MIRRI21 Coordinator, in addition to consultations by email or phone calls regarding the Code of Conduct and Ethics of MIRRI CCU, among other matters.



2. Meetings

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2.1. Kick-off Meeting

The kick-off meeting of the **IS_MIRRI21** Project took place on the 25th and 26th March 2020. Originally scheduled to be held in Braga, Portugal, the meeting was transferred to teleconference format due to the ongoing limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The EB was represented in the kick-off by Malcolm Dando. From the AB no one was able to attend the meeting due to several constraints originated by the adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic situation and free agenda. The contributions with advices and insights on the establishment and operations of the different work packages of the project and MIRRI in general were sent by email communication or shared during the meeting.

2.2. EB-CCU Meeting regarding MIRRI CoC

On the 22nd February 2021, a meeting between the EB and the CCU members took place. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the drafted Code of Conduct and Ethics (CoC) for the CCU.

The meeting was led by Nelson Lima, the Coordinator of the project **IS_MIRRI21** and was attended by Malcom Dando and Ana Sofia Carvalho from the EB. This meeting was also attended by the CCU members, Luís Soares (Executive Director); Liliana Avila Ospina (Access Officer); Bassem Kheireddine (Project and Finance Manager); Ana Ferreira (Secretary); Peio Ziarsolo (IT Officer) and Armando Venâncio (Co-coordinator).

The CoC was previously developed in the WP3 and designed through a collaborative process by the CCU members. Afterwards, the CoC proposal was sent to the EB members for a more critical and in-depth view. The comments and ideas shared by the EB were discussed in the meeting.

The main ideas discussed were the following: the CoC should apply not only to the researchers but also to the research institution; the CoC should not only set norms and behaviours but should also address biosecurity and biosafety issues; and for the effectiveness of the code, it is necessary to train the scientists and the research infrastructures administration and staff on these subjects.

It was also mentioned that the application of the CoC should be assigned to someone outside the management team, who will work as contact point to people when there is an issue. And preferably the CoC should be done in a bottom-up perspective instead of a top-down.

The contributions of the different members resulted in a set of conclusions. The application of the CoC should be transferred to a top layer of the organisation (possibly will be the chair of the Assembly of Members, currently the ApM/Assembly of prospective Members) and, in the future, MIRRI should have a single CoC. The adaptation and merging of the CoC to a Security Code should be done under the supervision of the WP3 leader, Armando Venâncio.

At the meeting it was also decided that the EB could be more involved and be aware of MIRRI's activities. The EB members agreed to be part of the MIRRI interim Ethical Board and to meet every three months to follow up with the MIRRI activities. A draft of the course being developed by WP5 and the deliverable D1.5 will be sent to the EB to gather their opinions and suggestions.

EB suggested to meet more on regular basis than what is expected on the Grant Agreement, i.e., at least every 4 months.

2.3. Meeting with AB on the SRIA 2021-2030

A meeting with the AB took place on 19th February 2021 as a videoconference to discuss the MIRRI Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda 2021-2030 (SRIA).

The meeting was led by Nelson Lima and Luís Soares, and was attended by Agnes Borg, Eero Vuorio, Lene Lange, and Manfred Ruthsatz, from the AB. This meeting was also attended by the CCU members Liliana Avila Ospina; Ana Ferreira; and Peio Ziarsolo.

Concerning the discussion related with the SRIA, substantial contributions were received by email from Lene Lange and Eero Vuorio and during the meeting complemented with comments and suggestions from Agnes Borg and Manfred Ruthsatz. In general, the drafted SRIA was very well welcomed and the suggestions to improve and refine the final draft were also very welcomed by Nelson Lima and Luís Soares. In fact, whenever possible, they have been later integrated on the final version. The meeting was very enlightening and comprehensive, what makes clear the need to meet more regularly and overcoming the difficulties of the current pandemic times that overload the agendas with teleconference meetings.

Following this meeting, [IS_MIRRI21](#) hired LKCOM Agency to create the design of the agenda.

AB suggested to meet more on regular basis than what is expected on the Grant Agreement, i.e., at least every 4 months or every time that the work in progress needs insights from the Board.



3. Other Exchanges with AB & EB

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The IS_MIRRI21 Coordinator had several exchanges with the AB and the EB, by email or over the phone, whenever an expert opinion about strategic and ethics choices was needed, such as the case of the Code of Conduct (CoC) of the CCU and training courses, which were further discussed in the abovementioned teleconference meetings in February 2021. The AB and the EB members (Ana Sofia Carvalho, Malcolm Dando, and Maria-Luisa Lavitrano) were normally available to respond to MIRRI's queries.

As agreed in the EB-CCU meeting, quarterly meetings will be held to improve communication, develop the CoC further, and set the model for continuous cooperation in the future MIRRI-ERIC, to which the EB agreed.

In addition, Maria-Luisa Lavitrano was approached once regarding the admission of one MIRRI staff member in the EMMRI Executive Masters in Management of Research Infrastructures, in Milano-Bicocca University, as part of the RITrain.

Conclusion



4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the first report of the Advisory Board (AB) and of the Ethical Board (EB), despite the difficult circumstances caused by the pandemic situation, convincingly demonstrates their positive contribution in the administrative management of project, as well as to the development of the whole project IS_MIRRI21 from its start. Inclusion of highly qualified, experienced experts in Advisory Board and Ethical Board in accordance to the Grant Agreement, has promoted fruitful cooperation among IS_MIRRI21 Coordinator, MIRRI Central Coordinating Unit (CCU) and WPs leaders. Since several ethics issues (data sharing policy, biosafety and biosecurity issues, guidelines for authorship, compliance with international, EU and national law, etc.) arise in many areas of research, proposals, shared by EB in the joint meeting of EB and MIRRI CCU, should be taken into account and supported. For instance, Code of Conduct should apply not only to the researchers, but also to the research institutions.

Notably, the significant input of AB members in the preparation of MIRRI Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda's 2021-2030 (SRIA) documentation. As it was pointed out by the Project Coordinator, by improvement of the final draft of that very important document, the comments and suggestions, made by independent experts - AB members, will be taken into consideration. Alongside with the different activities of all WPs, above mentioned communications, interactions and mutual respect between AB and EB, and IS_MIRRI21 team have promoted the visible development of the project during the first year.

Collaborative work with AB and EB should be encouraged and supported also in the future, when it will be possible - in the form of "face to face" meetings and workshops.



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