



2nd TNA CALL

Deliverable 4.2



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Abstract:	D4.2 is the second report on the IS_MIRRI21 Transnation Access (TNA) programme, covering the period M13-24 February 2021 – 31 st January 2022). This document proving a description of the implementation strategy of the T programme prior to the launching of the 2 nd TNA call February 2022, including the appointment of the new Acco officer, the update of the TNA guidelines and procedu migration of the TNA online platform to the MI Collaborative Working Environment (CWE) and production of the communication material to suppor successful dissemination of the programme.		
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Executive summary

The Deliverable 4.2 (D4.2) illustrates a strategic plan for the implementation of the Transnational Access (TNA) programme of the IS_MIRRI21 (n^o 871129) EU project from M13 onwards. This document is the updated version of the D4.1 – 1st TNA call developed in M12, which is a handbook for the project partners to conceptualize and build a well-organized and efficient TNA programme *via* two TNA calls.

The TNA programme provides financial support to external users to access (physically, remotely and/or virtually) any of the 14 IS_MIRRI21 partners' research facilities across Europe. Through the TNA, targeted users, including researchers from academic or research institutions, non-profit organisations, or biotechnology companies, can also carry out their research projects.

The IP and the UVEG-CECT co-lead the WP4 "Transnational access to IS_MIRRI21". The WP4 main mission is to develop and to coordinate a TNA pilot that promotes transnational cooperation among MIRRI's members and external users, as well as the mobility of researchers. The work developed in the WP4 and coordinated by the Access officer will allow to test the interest of users in applying for funded access to microbial resources, services and facilities offered by the Access providers. Moreover, the relevance of integrating services into pipelines (called TNA workflows), the functionality of the access platform anchored to the website and finally the delivery of access will be evaluated.



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1. The TNA programme

2.1 **Principles of the TNA programme**

The TNA programme funds the access of international researchers to microbial resource research institutions. Researchers from academic organisations and companies in the fields of Health & Food, Agro-Food and Environment & Energy are invited to submit a project proposal to get funded access to any of the 14 partners' microbial facilities of the IS_MIRRI21 project across Europe (as detailed in D4.1). IS_MIRRI21 partners provide access to a wide variety of microbial resources, laboratories and state-of-the-art facilities, and technological platforms.

The Access officer is the main contact person to discuss the details about the TNA application. After the initial contact with the Access officer, applications are transferred to the Liaison officer(s) from the research infrastructure(s) of interest for technical verification and feasibility of the proposals before submission.

Proposals are evaluated and scored against selection and award criteria. The TNA programme uses a panel-based evaluation system, where a **User Selection Panel** (USP) composed of scientific experts evaluates proposals for funding the access to the IS_MIRRI21 partners.

The TNA programme provides three means of access: physical, remote and/or virtual.

During the physical access, users visit the Access Provider's facility and have access to its laboratories and equipment, in addition to staff expertise.

Virtual access can be defined as any access through communication networks in which resources can be simultaneously accessed by an unlimited number of users. This is the typical case of access to data and on-line applications.

Remote access can be defined as the non-physical access to the services of the Access Provider. Examples of remote access include:

- Set of experiments carried out at the Access Provider's location, but the user is not physically present at the installations (e.g., sample analysis and processing).
- Shipping of microbial strains/biological materials, based on the users' requests.

In case of remote access, the Liaison officer should ensure the delivery of the service required and liaise between the user and the infrastructure staff.

After the TNA access is completed, users are asked to provide a **confirmation of access**, a **TNA activity report,** and a **European Commission (EC) feedback survey**. In this survey,

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users should indicate the challenges (if any), the outcomes, and experiences of their access at the accessed infrastructure. This feedback is pivotal for the implementation of the future TNA calls.

IS_MIRRI21 follows the **FAIR** (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) and **Open Access** principles¹. All projects receiving Horizon 2020 funding are **required** to make sure that any peer-reviewed journal article they publish is openly accessible, free of charge (article 29.2. Model Grant Agreement).

Scientific research data, which is the data underlying publications and/or other data (such as curated but unpublished datasets or raw data) should be open access if there is no conflict of interests regarding distribution of the scientific information, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), privacy concerns and security.

¹ Guidelines to rules on open access to scientific publications and open access to research data in Horizon 2020. European Commission – Directorate General for research and innovation. Version 3.2, 21 March 2017.



2. Conceptualization and implementation of the TNA programme

2.2 The 1st TNA call (D4.1)

2.2.1 Conceptualization of the TNA programme

Research Infrastructures (RIs) play a key role in knowledge innovation and technology transfer, contributing to build up an efficient research and innovation environment by supporting the scientific community.

To facilitate users' access to RI resources and their related services, it is essential to set out principles and guidelines that can be used as a reference. In this perspective, the IS_MIRRI21 WP4 develops the Transnational Access programme as a pilot test of the organization and procedures to access future services, resources, and pipelines that MIRRI, as an upcoming RI, will provide.

The conceptualization and implementation of the TNA programme were developed from scratch, and the details were thoroughly described in the **deliverable D4.1** (M1-M12). A list of milestones was achieved before the launch of the 1st TNA call:

- Appointment of the Access officer (MS11)
- Appointment of Liaison officers
- Appointment of User Selection Panel USP panel (MS12)

These parties are key players in orchestrating the correct development and function of the Transnational Access of users to microbial resources, facilities and services offered by the IS_MIRRI21 partners *via* the two TNA calls.

The Access officer Liliana Avila Ospina (appointed in M3 by IP) managed and coordinated several aspects of the TNA programme for the launch of the 1st TNA call (January 2021): website content, handling correspondence with applicants, processing received proposals and checking for project feasibility before submission to the USP for the scientific evaluation, troubleshooting, handling reporting and ensuring timely implementation of rules and policies.

The Liaison officers are local Access officers representing the 14 IS_MIRRI21 providers appointed in July 2020; they actively participated to build up an efficient TNA programme in the context of the 1st TNA call.

Twelve scientists with top expertise on the fields of submitted project proposals were appointed as members of the USP in November 2020.



2.1.2. Results from the 1st TNA call (D4.1)

Four project proposals were selected, and four applicants got funded TNA access to five Access providers' facilities:

1. Institut Pasteur (IP) & National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA)

On 07-27.11.2021 the TNA "IDEACT: IDEntifying and prioritizing novel marine ACTinobacteria for drug discovery" was performed. IP hosted a post-doctoral scientist (Dr Fortunato Palma Esposito) from Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn (IT). This TNA resulted from a research workflow set-up by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and the Institut Pasteur entitled "Identification of taxonomically related *Streptomyces* strains from extreme Greek environments using mass spectrometry profiles". IP also hosted the Liaison officer of NKUA Paris Laskaris from the 24th to the 27th of November to discuss the progress of the project and the methodologies used in this research workflow.

2. University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC-BEA)

From the three TNA proposal received, the panel of experts awarded Assunta Saide from Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn (IT), with funded access to the BEA facility: "Experimental plant for microalgae and cyanobacteria production" for her project proposal "MAREX – Microalgae: a source to be explored". The TNA was carried out remotely and completed on 24 January 2022. Six strains of microalgae, selected from the BEA catalogue, were scaled up in biological quadruplicate PET photobioreactors (10 litres) and cultivated for 12 weeks, until obtaining the biomass requested by the user to develop the chemical extraction and bioactivity screenings.

3. Institute of Agricultural and Food Biotechnology (IAFB)

On 18-23.10.2021 the TNA "Identification of *Alicyclobacillus* sp. by molecular biology techniques" was performed. Dr Agapi Doulgeraki, a scientist from the Hellenic Agricultural Organization – DIMITRA, Institute of Agricultural Products, Athens, Greece, was hosted at IAFB. After finishing the TNA, the user sent the report to the Access officer, and all formal procedures were completed.

4. Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA)

Roksana Majewska was granted for access to INRA's offer "*In vitro* screening of antiinfectious activities: antibacterial, antiviral and antiparasitic" during the 1st TNA call with her project proposal: "Unveiling the Secrets of Epizoic Diatoms: charismatic microflora as potential bioactive compound producers". The access to INRA has been delayed because of the late arrival of the samples (mid-November) to be analysed. In addition, the small



quantity of the aliquots necessitated a change in the testing strategy to preserve the samples.

The Access officer also developed the eligibility criteria (in accordance with EC regulations) for MIRRI's TNA pilot program, as well as procedures and guidelines, all of which are found in the TNA portal. Several documents were thus produced and included in the **deliverable D4.1**:

- Guidelines for applicants, reviewers, USP panel, and information and communication technology (ICT) (Annex 1 of D4.1).
- User Access Contract, Application form, evaluation form for reviewers and Feedback surveys for users, access providers and reviewers.

Through the establishment of ICT guidelines, the Access officer provided specifications for the creation of the future TNA portal in the Collaborative Work Environment (CWE) being developed by the IS_MIRRI21 WP6. This web-based portal was intended to serve as a unique entry point for the online management of the research proposals, access to services and users' requests during the 1st and 2nd call in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

However, due to the longer-than-expected set-up timelines for the CWE, the TNA application platform was moved to a cloud service provided by Instruct-ERIC named ARIA. Overall, the application platform in ARIA functioned well for all parties involved in the selection process, proving to be an efficient tool to manage proposals.

2.3 The 2nd TNA call (D4.2)

2.3.1 Implementation of the TNA programme

A new Access officer was appointed in October 2021. Adriana Chiarelli, PhD in microbiology, was recruited to work as Access officer of the IS_MIRRI21 TNA programme at IP in Paris.

Three new Liaison officers were appointed: Marta Avramova for INRAE, Adriana Chiarelli for IP, and Annick Wilmotte for BCCM-ULC.

The 1st TNA call resulted in:

- Ten applications to access six facilities (8 users working in EU and 2 working overseas: Africa and Latin America; all users were from academia and most of them had previously applied to TNA programmes of other RIs)
- Four projects awarded, in the fields of pharmacology, agri-food and environmental conservation.
- Five IS_MIRRI21 partners providing access to the four awardees.



Other observations were considered for the development of the 2nd TNA call:

- Limited number of applications in the 1st TNA call (n=10)
- Poor match between the TNA offers of the 14 Access Providers and the users' requests. In some cases, the service could not be provided.
- Some USP members declined the evaluation of proposals "out of their expertise".
 Need for external reviewers to cover more scientific fields.

After discussion with partners and clarifications from the EC Policy Officer, some decisions regarding the **TNA offer**, the **scientific evaluation panel** and the **CWE** were taken by partners to improve the 2nd TNA call outcome.

1) Flexibility of the TNA offer

The limited number of applications (n=10) to the 1st call might have resulted from the ongoing sanitary crisis due to COVID-19 pandemic and/or the lack of attractiveness of the Access providers' offers. A survey to assess the users' interest was performed after the 1st call, highlighting that the real expectations of the potential users matched poorly with the TNA offer. In the light of these observations, some Access providers participating to the 2nd TNA call adjusted their offer to users' needs (wherever possible), without impacting on the budget of each provider (listed in Table 1). However, due to the very specific offers (resulting from budget limitation and difficulties encountered in modifying existing offers) proposed by the partners participating to the 2nd call, no workflows could be pre-established.

Туре	Access Provider	Infrastructure	TNA Offer	Country
	Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences-Centraalbureau voor Schimmelcultures - KNAW	Westerdijk fungal biodiversity institute - CBS	Heterologous expression of silent fungal gene clusters	Netherlands
		Agro-food & Environmental Fungal Collection - MUCL	<i>In vitro</i> culture of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi	Belgium
È	BELSPO_BCCM	Fungi Collection: Human & Animal Health - IHEM	Pathogenic fungi: preservation, MALDI-TOF MS & medical importance of dermatophytes	Belgium
FACILITY		Cyanobacteria Collection - ULC	From the isolation of cyanobacteria, over their cultivation and preservation, to their characterization	Belgium
	Universitat de València – UVEG	Spanish Type Culture Collection - CECT	Microbial preservation methods and quality control procedures	Spain
	Università degli Studi di Torino - UT	Mycotheca Universitatis Taurinensis - MUT	Identification of fungi in pure culture	Italy
PRODUC T	BELSPO_BCCM	Agro-food & Environmental Fungal Collection - MUCL	Arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi strains produced in vitro	Belgium

Tahla 1	TNIA offo	r provided by	the nine	nartnere	narticinating	to the 2nd TNA call.
	TINA OILC	i piovided by		partitions	participating	



	Universitat de València – UVEG	Spanish Type Culture Collection - CECT	Archaea, bacteria, yeast, and filamentous fungi from the UVEG-CECT public catalogue	Spain
	Institute of Biochemistry and Physiology of Microorganisms, Russian Academy of Sciences – IBPM - RAS	All Russian Collection of Microorganisms - VKM	Microbial strains from extreme Russian environments	Russia
	Universitat de València – UVEG	Spanish Type Culture Collection - CECT	Phylogenomics and phenotype prediction of prokaryotes	Spain
SERVICE	University of Latvia - UL	Microbial Strain Collection of Latvia - MSCL	In vitro screening and testing of Minimal Inhibitory Concentration (MIC)	Latvia
	Università degli Studi di Torino - UT	Mycotheca Universitatis Taurinensis - MUT	Multi-Locus Microsatellite Typing (MLMT)	Italy
	University of Minho - Uminho	Micoteca da Universidade do Minho - MUM	Food Mycology	Portugal

2) User Selection Panel (USP)

Seven out of the twelve USP scientists already confirmed their availability (Table 2, in green) for the evaluation process of the 2nd TNA call, whereas two declined (Table 2, in red). This panel of experts will review and select the proposals that will be awarded with funded access to any of the nine partners' facilities participating to the 2nd call. As already anticipated in D4.1, recruitment of new members covering several areas of expertise is needed.

Table 2. IS_MIRRI21 USP member	s.
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NAME	DOMAIN OF EXPERTISE	ASSOCIATION	POSITION
Marc Stadler	fungal taxonomy	Helmholtz centre for infection research (HZI)	Head of Department Microbial Drugs (MWIS)
Manfred Ruthsatz	microbiomes and regulatory affairs	Nutrition Health Care - IS_MIRRI21 AB	Executive Director at Nutrition+HealthCARE
Susana Rodriguez-Couto	environmental microbiology	Ikerbasque - Basque Foundation for Science	Professor and consultant
Paola Battilani	Food mycology	Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy, Piacenza - Institute of Entomology and Plant Pathology	Professor
David Smith	David Smith mBRC quality management and legal framework United Kingdom		Director, Biological Resources
Giovanna Felis Lactobacilli and fermentation processes Universita de Verona - Agriculture microbiology		Universita de Verona - Agriculture microbiology	Associate Professor
Edoardo Puglisi	food and environmental microbiologists	Catholic University of the Sacred Heart UNICATT	Associated professor
Paola Bonfante mycorrhizal fungi and plant microbiome		Università degli Studi di Torino UNITO · Dipartimento di Scienze della Vita e Biologia dei Sistemi	Emeritus professor and research leader
Alfred Beran microalgae		National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics - OGS · Section of Physical, Chemical and Biological Oceanography	Researcher



3) TNA platform on MIRRI CWE

The TNA platform was implemented as a new module in the <u>CWE</u> on January 17th, 2022 (Figure 1). After some technical problems, the TNA submission portal went live on 7th February 2022, one week after the launch of the 2nd TNA call (1st February 2022).

Based on the experience obtained during the 1st TNA call using ARIA as online application platform, we gained a better understanding of what could be developed for the MIRRI CWE, which functionalities can be used, and which ones must be created to have a friendly and efficient environment for the management of access in the CWE. This is still under development in the activities of IS_MIRRI21 WP6, therefore, the 2nd TNA call will still be managed with the ARIA platform.



Figure 1. Implementation of the TNA platform on the MIRRI website



3. Outreach and dissemination strategy

Communication activities are essential for the implementation and the success of the IS_MIRRI21 TNA programme. This strategic tool calls for cooperation and coordination of different parties involved in the management and execution of the programme, namely IS_MIRRI21 WP4, WP6 and WP7.

In the 1st TNA call, a dissemination and outreach strategy was developed to promote the efficient, transparent, and user-friendly access to relevant documents, as well as information about the programme requirement and administrative procedures. Key tools to support and strengthen the communication network, detailed in D4.1, included:

- an illustrated TNA catalogue containing clear, easy-to-understand information about the TNA offers and the IS MIRRI21 Access providers
- a TNA flyer
- a TNA webpage, social media, and internal scientific networks of IS_MIRRI21 partners and external collaborators for the continuous advertisement of the TNA programme
- online newsletter
- press materials

For the 2nd TNA call, some of these tools were updated:

1) TNA Flyer

The TNA programme information flyer contains information about the TNA partners participating in the call, what is sponsored by the programme, contacts, call opening dates, and addresses the targeted audience.

The new TNA flyer (Annex 3) advertising the 2nd TNA call was posted on social media and it is available for download on the <u>MIRRI webpage</u>.

2) TNA catalogue

The TNA catalogue is an illustrated document that describes the TNA offers (composed by Products, Services and Facilities) of each of the Access providers participating in the call. This document is assembled and entirely illustrated by the Access officer, then reviewed and approved by all Liaison officers and the CCU.

The offer of the nine providers participating to the 2nd TNA call is detailed in the <u>TNA</u> <u>catalogue</u>, which was published online in January 2022 on the MIRRI TNA webpage (Annex

2).



3) TNA portal

The TNA portal is a space developed for the 1st TNA call, containing all the information about the programme and description of each step of the TNA call. For the launch of the 2nd TNA call, the content was updated by the Access officer with the support of other parties, as detailed in the 2nd annual activity report (**deliverable D1.4**).

The structure of the portal was modified to show the following subpages (Figure 4):

- The TNA programme
- Eligibility
- Access providers (Map and list of partners participating to the 2nd call)
- TNA catalogue: List of Products/services/facilities
- TNA process Application procedure
- Evaluation process: score and evaluation, ranking methodology
- Publication of awarded proposals
- Access: Support provided before, during and after the access, User access contract negotiation
- Reporting: Confirmation of access, TNA activity report, User questionnaire and TNA feedback survey
- Reimbursement
- Dissemination of results: EU policies about dissemination of results and acknowledgement
- TNA documents: links to download the guidelines for applicants, the TNA catalogue, and the TNA flyer (Annexes 1 to 3)
- Researchers awarded during the 1st call: Name, institution, pictures, and quotes from the four TNA users awarded in the 1st TNA call 2021





Figure 2. TNA webpage at mirri.org

4) Social media and internal research networks

As comprehensively described in the D4.1, social media were used as strategic tools to target audiences in a more dynamic and immediate manner. An IS_MIRRI21/MIRRI account was created on platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter to disseminate the activities, offers and communication material related to the TNA calls.

Other institutional social media accounts used to promote the 2nd TNA call include:

MIRRI-IT Twitter

https://twitter.com/ItMirri/status/1488968599654080531?cxt=HHwWpoC9ga7D8KkpAAAA MIRRI-IT LinkedIn https://www.linkedin.com/posts/mirri-it_mirri-microbialresourcesmicrobialinnovations-activity-6889601143773642752-BpHz

BCCM Collections Twitter https://twitter.com/BccmCollections

BEA Twitter

https://twitter.com/MIRRI_live/status/1490663297447825408?s=20&t=srYGMOI3fXxr7HiCB MGQTQ

BEA Instagram https://www.instagram.com/p/CZtmzI3sn3_/?utm_medium=share_sheet BEA LinkedIn https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6896152333856960512 UVEG-CECT Facebook

https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.uv.es%2Fuvweb%2Fcoleccionespanola-cultivos-tipo%2Fes%2Fnovedades%2F-ya-esta-abierta-segunda-convocatoriaacceso-transnacional-tna-mirri--

<u>1285923246228%2FNovetat.html%3Fid%3D1286241503869%26fbclid%3DlwAR38eP7Ny</u> <u>kSK84I_QpqHGSHJttYFvjZwZ3XoQY0vGZTCgMmOa13AylWf3l8&h=AT0RfQJJtY83E349</u> <u>GzHmGlBdqBPlxxSX1qiTO_8tU1tJfVc88SBLn0eP23a-Hz-q-</u>

EBXKoHI1N7xQefD7XkN8zYExzpDmG7N8bal6cFWJkEFUvMqYywLtvTS6BL1IwTRt8w

UVEG-CECT LinkedIn

https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6895271156908134401

International R&D UV @oper_uv

https://twitter.com/MIRRI_live/status/1490663297447825408

Eurorecerca Universitat de Valencia

https://www.facebook.com/eurorecerca/posts/402030778392641

Healthcare Sector Group of the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) LinkedIn

https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3281091/

MikroBioKosmos LinkedIn

https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3773801/

EIC Community in Portugal LinkedIn

https://www.linkedin.com/groups/9029446/

EIT - European Institute of Innovation and Technology LinkedIn

https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4079871/

"HORIZON EUROPE" Framework Programme for Research and Innovation LinkedIn

https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3731775/





Figure 3. Some social media posts advertising the 2nd TNA call and its promotional material in Twitter and LinkedIn.

In addition, some of the research networks used for the dissemination of the 2nd TNA call include the internal mailing lists of each MIRRI partner (universities [University of Valencia–Agro/Health/Environment; University of Montpellier - I-SITE MUSE], institutes [Sciensano], organisations [BELSPO, BCCM, Association Française d'Ecologie Microbienne (AFEM), Algae-L, Euroagrobio, Euromediambient and Eurosalut], other RIs (BBMRI-ERIC), research departments [Dipartamento di Scienze della vita e Biologia dei Sistemi-UNITO], etc.), partners' webpages (UVEG-CECT, CRBIP-IP, UCLouvain, BCCM (ONGOING), UNITO, UVEG, BEA, and MIRRI-IT websites), Sociedade Portuguesa de Microbiologia, the Société Française de Microbiologie (SFM), MicroBioSpain, fundsforNGOs.

The partners also spread information about the call through colleagues working in different research centres in Europe.

4. Challenges and mitigation actions

The IS_MIRRI21 TNA programme is a pilot with the key objective of implementing and improving the upcoming MIRRI service provision and access to bioresources. During the 1st call the focus was on conceptualization, definition of the communication strategy and launch of the TNA programme.

Through the 1st TNA call, 17 access provision pilots, including five services, three microbial products, six facilities and three workflows were offered.

The low number of applications (n = 10) to the 1st TNA call might have resulted from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a concern that was expressed in D4.1 and for which considerations of possible scenarios and related corrective actions were proposed. Another reason behind the observed low interest might be a poor match of TNA offers with the scientific community's interests. Some Access providers could not offer the service that users were asking for, due to the limitation of TNA pilots to specific services at IS_MIRRI21 facilities

As the IS_MIRRI21 TNA is a pilot programme, budget constraints limit the number of accesses that can be realized and impact on the range of flexibility of the TNA offer. However, in this 2nd TNA call, some modifications were introduced, based on the numerous requests received at <u>tna@mirri.org</u> and <u>access@mirri.org</u> email addresses, and the results of the user's survey conducted with the purposes of better identifying the major interests of the scientific community.



5. Annexes

- Annex 1 Updated guidelines and other documents
- Annex 2 TNA catalogue for the 2nd TNA call
- Annex 3 TNA Flyer for the 2nd TNA call
- Annex 4 Updated confirmation of access



INCLUSION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

MICROBIAL RESOURCE RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE