



D8.3

COMMON POSITION PAPERS RESULTING FROM INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOPS



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Abstract:	This is the report from the international workshop concerning the matter of the current state of MIRRI. This will allow us to scope the progression towards the MIRRI RI enlargement.	
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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 towards the RI enlargement. Throughout this report, we explain the objectives and methodology of expansion. We also analyse 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 is about 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 countries engaged in the RI with a financial contribution, and to enlarge the mBRCs 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 analyse such motives and share experiences from engaged countries to better explain the advantages of becoming a MIRRI Member in order to attract them. A tailored plan on the ways to adapt MIRRI's offer accommodating specific country requirements (e.g. adaptation of services among others) could also be considered. This will help to bring on board the initially not committed countries in the long term.

This deliverable reports on common position papers resulting from international workshops and 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 in the frame of this WP will promote 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 D8.3 is to present the common position papers resulting from international workshops concerning the current state of MIRRI, to ensure a successful implementation of the enlargement and consolidation plan, as the main goal of the WP8.

1.2. Methodology

Due to the ongoing pandemic situation caused by COVID-19, many of the activities that required physical attendance, face-to-face meetings, workshops were converted to online events. The limitations to travel and to visit personally interested collections and countries/intergovernmental organizations or to participate in relevant meetings did not facilitate the networking and building of trust that is required to convince potential partners to join the RI.



2. Common position papers resulting from international workshops

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A couple of common position papers have been produced and others are in the making. A good example is the paper entitled, “*MIRRI opens 2022 reporting its key results and unveils future strategic lines*”, available on social media: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/microbial-resource-research-infrastructure_mirri-22-key-advances-over-the-last-22-months-activity-6884095941729652737-ONXf.

Based on the work done in the previous months we have continued the process of membership enlargement and actively took part in different workshops, symposiums, and webinars organized in 2021.

On 15-17.06.2021, MIRRI participated in the international symposium: IS_MIRRI21:RI-VIS Latin America-Europa Symposium on Research Infrastructures. The webinar was open to all participants interested in learning more about European RIs, in particular, MIRRI as a pan-European RI. The main beneficiaries of the webinar were foreseen to be representatives from countries/governments or intergovernmental organizations addressing Research and Development, as well as representatives from microbial Biological Resource Centres (mBRCs), Culture Collections (CCs), universities, or research institutions potentially interested in joining MIRRI as members. The event took place on-line with IS_MIRRI21 virtual thematic webinar: “MIRRI Membership: Boosting research and innovation in Health, Agro-food, Environment and Energy”, and workshop: “International collaboration with MIRRI through new opportunities from the Horizon Europe programme”. Among the speakers were: Nelson Lima (Universidade do Minho), Joanna Bucka-Kolendo (IAFB), Rosa Aznar (UVEG-CECT), Gerard Verkleij (KNAW), Tedora Aibu (SPI).

On 27.06.2021, IS_MIRRI21 launched a webinar for the annual event of World Microbiome Day. The event aimed to approach citizens in a public engagement effort to investigate and bring recognition to the value of microorganisms in the world. The webinar was organized by experts and representatives of MIRRI partner organizations who acted as Microbiome Ambassadors: Giulia Cheloni (INRAE), Anna Poli (UNITO), Marwa Zaarour (INRAE), and Cristina Varese (UNITO).

MIRRI Partners took part in different workshops, webinars, and symposiums both at the European and international levels.

06-08.09.2021 III Symposium on Valuation & Conservation of Microbial Resources – Aurora Zuzuarregui.

The partners of IS_MIRRI21, with the leadership of INRAE from France, organized two webinars on November 18 and November 19, 2021, addressing the topics of microbial resources and microbial culture collections. The first webinar, called “Microbial resources for a green, healthy

and sustainable future”, focused on 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. After opening remarks by Luís Soares (MIRRI Executive Director), keynote speaker Dominik Sobczak (European Commission; ESFRI) addressed the relevance of research infrastructures to the new European Research Area and for delivering the impacts of Horizon Europe. MIRRI’s seven strategic areas were presented by Sylvain Brisse (Institut Pasteur), Nelson Lima (Universidade do Minho), Rosa Aznar (CECT/UVEG), Paris Laskaris (NKUA), Cristina Varese (UNITO), Craig Faulds (INRAE CIRM-CF), and Gerard Verkleij (KNAW). These presentations were complemented by speakers who showcased MIRRI’s participation in Horizon Europe and its clusters, such as the example of the ISIDORE project by Raquel Hurtado-Ortiz (Institut Pasteur), the BY-COVID project by Paolo Romano (HSM), and the general introduction of the Horizon Europe clusters of Health (Virginie Sivan, NCP-France, MESRI) and Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment (Marta Conde-Vidal, NCP-Spain, CDTI). More than 270 participants were registered and for more details see: <https://www.mirri.org/mirri-webinars-microbial-resources-for-a-green-healthy-and-sustainable-future-cutting-edge-technologies-for-2030-microbial-culture-collections/>



FIGURE 1 – BANNER OF THE MIRRI'S WEBINARS.

At the ECCO AGM Meeting (ECCO - the European Culture Collections Organisation, <http://www.eccosite.org/> 24.09.2021, we obtained the information from SAG - Culture Collection of Algae, Gottingen, Germany, that they are interested in collaborating with MIRRI. With this knowledge, we are proceeding with the next steps to contact SAG representatives as well as their country representatives and that will be the top priority for future engagement.

At the SIRGEAC International Symposium on Genetic Resources for the Americas and the Caribbean, which took place on 30.11.2021, MIRRI was represented by Rosa Aznar (UVEG-CECT), and Vincent Robert (KNAW).

At the beginning of December, the MIRRI Coordinator Nelson Lima had face-to-face meetings with the collections based in South America. The meetings were organized in Brazil (Rio de

Janeiro) with the National Health Institute (FioCruz), which includes several important microbial collections, especially the IOC-Instituto Oswaldo Cruz collections (<https://portal.fiocruz.br/en/unidade/oswaldo-cruz-institute-ioc>), the new COVID-19 Biobank (<https://portal.fiocruz.br/en/news/fiocruz-inaugurates-covid-19-biobank>) and is leading the Brazilian CC Network. FioCruz's COVID-19 Biobank Manuela da Silva which is also currently the WFCC vice-president.



FIGURE 2 – MIRRI @ FIOCRUZ IN RIO DE JANEIRO (BRAZIL)

Next, MIRRI Coordinator Nelson Lima visited Santiago de Chile and had several meetings with the Collections from the Chilean Network of Microbial and Algal Culture Collections, governmental institutions (e.g., Agricultural Research Institute – INIA), and the Chilean Industrial Confederation (SOFOFA) and University of La Frontera (UFRO) in Temuco. The discussions revolved around the possibilities of a potential collaboration with MIRRI and what kind of MoU or any other binding approach can be explored, as well as on the costs and benefits for Chile to be a member of MIRRI, and how they can nationally be organized in their own MIRRI Node. The meetings were fruitful and brought relevant outcomes as Chile signalled interest in the RI. From the MIRRI site, the Chilean Network will receive full support to accelerate the establishment of a potential MIRRI Node in the country.



FIGURE 3 – PRESENTATION OF MIRRI & ITS STRATEGIC AGENDA FOR THE DECADE AT UFRO.

At University of La Frontera (UFRO), which hosts the leadership of the Chilean CC network, Nelson Lima had several meetings with high level academic authorities to get support for the Chilean MIRRI Node to be established. Two presentations were done to reinforce the importance to be member of MIRRI: “MIRRI and its Strategic Agenda for the Decade” and “IS_MIRRI21 EU Project and other MIRRI Horizon Europa Projects”.

UNIVERSIDAD DE LA FRONTERA
FACULTAD DE INGENIERÍA Y CIENCIAS
PROGRAMA DE DOCTORADO EN CIENCIAS DE RECURSOS NATURALES

COLOQUIO EN RECURSOS MICROBIOLÓGICOS
“POTENCIALES INTERACCIONES CON LA INFRAESTRUCTURA EUROPEA MIRRI”

PROGRAMA

11:15 - 11:30 h
Palabras de bienvenidas
Dr. Jorge Farías
Decano
Facultad de Ingeniería y Ciencias
Universidad de La Frontera,
Temuco, Chile

11:30 - 12:00 h
MIRRI and its Strategic Agenda for the Decade
Dr. Nelson Lima
MIRRI European Headquarters
University of Minho, Braga, Portugal

12:00 - 12:30 h
Preguntas y respuestas

12:30 - 12:45 h
IS_MIRRI_21 EU Project and other MIRRI Horizon Europa Projects
Dr. Nelson Lima
MIRRI European Headquarters
University of Minho, Braga, Portugal

12:45 - 13:00 h
Preguntas y respuestas

Cierre

MODERADORA
Dr. Lorena Vielí
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Universidad de La Frontera

15 DE DICIEMBRE DE 2021
AUDITORIO ALBERTO LEVY
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Inscripción asistencia presencial
(Aforo máximo presidencial 20 personas)
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(Cupos ilimitados)
Traducción simultánea inglés-español

Prof. Dr. Nelson Lima
is PhD in Engineering Sciences (Biotechnology) by UMinho (1993) and in 2004 he was appointed Full Professor of University of Minho (Portugal). His research is related to environmental (biodegradation/biodeterioration) and food mycology with integration of polyphasic for fungal identification with long-term preservation. Since 1996 he has been the head of “Micoteca da Universidade do Minho” fungal culture collection and was a member of the executive board of WFCC and Collection Officer and past-President of ECCO-European Culture Collection Organisation. Currently, He is the PI of the European Project IS_MIRRI21 (<https://ismirri21.mirri.org/>) and head of headquarters establishment of MIRRI-European Microbial Resource Research Infrastructure (www.mirri.org). Professor Lima is the national coordinator of the MIRRI Portuguese National node (MIRRI-PT/PT-mBRON, <https://mbron.pt/>). He has been a partner of Portuguese, European Union and Brazilian research funding projects and evaluator in several funding agencies. He supervised 24 PhD and 30 MSc theses and published about 170 ISI publications (h-I 37) and more than 540 conferences and communications. He is an invited Professor in different Brazilian Universities and at Milan-Bicocca University. In 2016, he was granted the title “Professor Honoris Causa” by the University Federal of Pernambuco (Recife, Brazil).



FIGURE 4 – FLYER OF THE MIRRI AND IS_MIRRI21 SEMINARS AT UFRO.

2.1. The plans for the future collaboration

On the 18 January 2022, MIRRI Partners including Nelson Lima (Universidade do Minho), Rosa Aznar (UVEG-CECT), Marleen Bosschaerts (BCCM/BELSPO), Luís Soares (MIRRI Executive Director), Joanna Bucka-Kolendo (IAFB), Justyna Nasiłowska (IAFB) had a meeting concerning the organization of the next steps to reach out to the mBRCs and their Country representatives, as a top priority with the potential of the enlargement of MIRRI consortium. Due to the difficulty of planning and organizing workshops, and face-to-face meetings because of the current COVID-19 pandemic situation, it is our priority to contact Country representatives, intergovernmental organizations, and culture collections we reached out to in the past. Likewise, we need to gather new information about the high potential of interest in joining MIRRI.

Collections, contacted in the past, that we plan to contact/eventually include:

1. SAG - Culture Collection of Algae, Gottingen, Germany
2. DSMZ - German Collection of Microorganisms and Cell Cultures GmbH, Germany
3. CCF - Culture Collection of Fungi, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
4. CCUG - Culture Collection, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
5. CCY - Culture Collection of Yeasts, Institute of Chemistry, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovakia
6. NCAIM - National Collection of Agricultural and Industrial Micro-organisms, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary
7. Montenegro - as MIRRI is on the Montenegrin Research Infrastructures Roadmap 2019-2020
8. LuxMCC - Luxemburg Microbial Culture Collection
9. CCOS - Culture Collection of Switzerland

A package with several relevant documents about the infrastructure (the MIRRI statutes, presentation of the MIRRI Institutional profile and its key achievements, and the SRIA (Research and Innovation Strategic Agenda) will be sent to the CC together with the invitation letter (request for a meeting). The meeting proposal with Country representatives will have the participation of the IS_MIRRI21 project Coordinator, the MIRRI Executive Director and the chairs of the Interim National Coordinators Forum (INCF) and the Assembly of prospective Members (ApM) as in many countries the decision might be highly politicized.

Acquiring the ERIC status soon will certainly boost the enlargement and business efforts. IS_MIRRI21's partners are ready to operationalize and lead the prospective members to join MIRRI, which needs work on a legal, procedural and managerial levels.

Table 1 presents the risk and mitigation measures that are envisaged for the enlargement and Table 2 mentions the KPI defined in the [IS_MIRRI21](#) Grant Agreement.

Table 1 – Critical risks for implementation in WP8.

No	Description of Risk (likelihood)	Proposed risk-mitigation measures
1.	Enlargement with reduced success (medium)	Enlargement will be crucial for MIRRI'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 mBRCs and CCs partner base. In the case of country rejections, the underlying reasons will be inquired and registered. This will allow the team to understand and analyse such motives and conceive a plan on the ways to adapt MIRRI's offer accommodating specific country needs (e. g., adapt services or other) and sharing experiences in other countries to better show the mutual advantages of becoming a MIRRI member. In the long-term, this will help bring on board the initially uninterested countries.

Table 2 – Key Performance Indicators.

No	Indicator	Enlarge the number of European and associated countries participating in the infrastructure
1.	Target	Increase the number of MoU signatories by 4 countries by the end of the project

3. Conclusion



3. Conclusion

Referring to the main tasks proposed in the framework of the WP8, the present report of D8.3 undoubtedly shows that during the reporting period of two years much has been achieved, especially in the dissemination of information about MIRRI membership. In accordance to the EU required policy, during the development of a research infrastructure, it is important to enlarge its interface also beyond EU. MIRRI's participation in the several international symposia and face-to-face meetings is of the great importance. As beneficiaries of such events are different institutions, including CCs, governmental and Networks' representatives, and parties potentially interested in MIRRI like Brazil and Chile. These two non-European members will bring to MIRRI, as a whole, important assets as they represent important hotspots of microbial diversity: only Brazil represent about 23% of the total biodiversity on the Earth and Chile has very important extreme ecological habitats. Moreover, they have important information related with these holdings.

In spite of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, communication with several EU countries representatives regarding the MIRRI membership has been very successful. It is welcomed that 9 CCs from different European regions have expressed their interest to join MIRRI. We would like to point out especially the willingness of CCUG (Sweden) to join MIRRI, hoping that others Scandinavian (Northern European) CC or BRC will follow. Probably, the additional analysis of the current circumstances preventing above mentioned 9 CCs to join MIRRI consortium is needed, in spite of the fact that many discussions already have taken place during WP8/WP9 videoconferences.

It is expected that, by the end of the project, 4 countries will have signed the MoU.

We would like to assume that the very soon granting of ERIC status to MIRRI will facilitate the operation of National nodes, will strengthen mutual trust and promote the success of MIRRI as pan-European infrastructure.



MIRRI IS21

IMPLEMENTATION AND
SUSTAINABILITY FOR
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