





## **Press release**

## SUS-MIRRI.IT Strengthening the MIRRI Italian Research Infrastructure for Sustainable Bioscience and Bioeconomy

Two years after the start of the activities, the **second intermediate meeting** of the **SUS-MIRRI.IT** project took place on January 20, 2025, in Rome at the CNR headquarters. Around 150 researchers, PhD students, and technical staff from all Operational Units attended the event, both in person and remotely.

**SUS-MIRRI.IT** is a research project in the field of microbial resources, funded with approximately **17 million euros** from EU funds under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (**NRRP**). Coordinated by the **University of Turin**, the project involves **24 Operational Units** spread across Italy and belonging to **15 different Research Institutions**. Structured into six Work Packages (WP), the project aims to strengthen the **Italian network of microbial collections**, **MIRRI-IT**, for the preservation and exploitation of the biotechnological potential of microbial biodiversity.

The day began with an opening welcome by Dr. Moretti (CNR-ISPA), followed by Prof. Varese, the Scientific Coordinator of the project, who announced that the establishment of the **Italian National Node** of the European Research Infrastructure for Microbial Resources, MIRRI-ERIC, is underway. Presentations from the six WPs followed, illustrating the project's progress, achievements, challenges encountered, and corrective actions taken.

Prof. Prigione (**WP1**, University of Turin) presented the management and governance aspects of the project, emphasizing the future sustainability of the Research Infrastructure; Dr. Perrone (**WP2**, CNR-ISPA) discussed the technological strengthening of microbial collections through the acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment and the implementation of procedures for quality and safety management of the collections; Prof. Beccuti (**WP3**, University of Turin) reported on progress in the FAIR-compliant digitalization of the national database of microbial resources and the development of specific bioinformatics workflows; Prof. Cocolin (**WP4**, University of Turin) described the progress made by the Units involved in the study of microbiome conservation and valorization; Prof. Buzzini (**WP5**, University of Perugia) detailed the status of the services and specialized training courses offered to the national and international scientific community, highlighting the launch of the **Transnational Access** call, which provides researchers worldwide access to innovative technologies available at national microbial biobanks. Finally, Prof. Gullo (**WP6**, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia) provided an update on the project's communication activities, showcasing the achievements of SUS-MIRRI.IT's media initiatives and various dissemination activities over the past two years, including publications, participation in conferences, and the organization of seminars and workshops.

Subsequently, the 24 Operational Units presented their progress within the various WPs. These presentations highlighted significant results achieved by SUS-MIRRI.IT in terms of **quality assurance processes** for microbial collections and the objectives met, partly due to the acquisition of cutting-edge laboratory equipment. While no issues were reported that might compromise the overall outcomes of the project, some common challenges emerged, primarily related to the complex bureaucratic and administrative management of the NRRP. These challenges have led to delays in procurement procedures and infrastructure upgrades, resulting in a slowdown in the execution of certain activities. This has required additional efforts to align with the project's objectives.

In closing, Prof. Varese expressed full satisfaction with the collaborative efforts across all Operational Units to support sustainable biosciences, technology transfer, green transition, and the development of the country's bioeconomy. The SUS-MIRRI.IT project is consolidating the Italian network of microbial biobanks, raising quality standards, and serving as a **model Research Infrastructure** at the European level. In the coming months, efforts will focus on **ensuring the long-term sustainability** of the MIRRI-IT National Node by stabilizing the highly qualified and specialized personnel hired across the various Operational Units.

## SUS-MIRRI.IT in a nutshell

50 researchers, PhD students, and technicians have been hired;

**77%** of the funds allocated for the purchase of scientific equipment and cutting-edge technologies have been spent; The **national catalogue of Italian microbial resources** has been created, currently containing over 37,000 strains of filamentous fungi, bacteria, yeasts, microalgae, and plant viruses;

25 Training courses already delivered;

56 new services for microbial analyses developed at the Operational Units;

**48 scientific papers** published, followed by a large number of posters and presentations at national and international conferences.