

EMbaRC

European Consortium of Microbial Resource Centres

CIRM(INRA), CRBIP, DSMZ, CBS, CECT, MUM, BCCM, CABI

The properties of microorganisms have been harnessed by man for thousands of years, particularly in brewing and baking but their uses continue to expand not just in food and healthcare but in almost all areas of industry and environmental maintenance. Their authentication, characterisation, stable storage and supply are a major contribution to the knowledge-based bioeconomy. The EMbaRC project is working to coordinate these microbial resources so that researchers in Europe and around the globe have better access and take full advantage of Europe's microbial resource centres.

EMbaRC will create a self-sustainable community of European Microbial Resource Centres. These centres will offer immense bio-diversity and a wide range of biological resources as well as expert services. Together this will encourage the development of new partnerships between public and private organisations which will not only generate revenue but also better microbial research.

The project is further laying the foundation for a Global Biological Resource Centre Network giving Europe a lead role in on the global microbial scene. Part of this is setting up better access to biological resources and associated services. This benefits researchers as they will be able to take advantage of previous outcomes and other resources for their research.

For EMbaRC to be a successful project, quality, standards and access need to be harmonised across all partner organisations. As such, an important element of the project is sharing best practices between all involved research institutes and ensuring the best operational standards are being used in all microbial research centres. EMbaRC researchers are also working on creating a code of conduct for biosecurity for European microbial biological resource collections. This will ensure that all specimens contained in any of the microbial resource centres will not, intentionally or unintentionally, be used in the creation of biological weapons.

Furthermore, there are numerous microbial collections that have either been abandoned or are endangered that will receive support from the EMbaRC project. Their resources will be integrated into the larger EMbaRC community, adding immense value to the project and these smaller centres benefit from the resources and expertise of the larger centres.

Over the long term, EMbaRC aims to bring together biological resource centres to find complementary sources of funding and ensure their continued existence. Moreover, joint research will improve strain and DNA storage and explore new microorganism identification methods. A greater number of users will have access to these resource centres, and their research through improved dissemination efforts, including the creation of an extensive web portal and information database as well as regular publication of results to the wider scientific community.

Start date: 1st February 2009 / **Completion date:** 31st January 2012

Project webpage: www.embarc.eu

