

Minutes of the open plenary meetings of the International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes, 11 October 2022 and 14 December 2023

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Abstract

Open virtual plenary meetings of the International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes (ICSP) were held on 11 October 2022 and on 14 December 2023. To comply with Articles 4(d) and 5(d)(1) of the statutes of the ICSP, the minutes of these meetings are published here.

Open virtual plenary meetings of the International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes (ICSP) were held on 11 October 2022 and on 14 December 2023. According to Article 4(d) of the statutes of the ICSP, minutes of the plenary meetings of the ICSP are reported by publication in the *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology* (IJSEM). According to Article 5(d)(1), it is the task of the Executive Secretary of the ICSP to submit the minutes of the plenary meetings for publication in the journal. To comply with the statutes, the minutes of the two meetings are presented below.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE ON SYSTEMATICS OF PROKARYOTES. MINUTES OF THE OPEN PLENARY MEETING, TUESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2022, VIA ZOOM

Minute 1. Call to order

ICSP Chair I.C. Sutcliffe called the meeting to order at 09.00 CET.

Minute 2. Record of attendance

The meeting was attended by I.C. Sutcliffe (Chair, ICSP), A. Oren (Executive Secretary, ICSP), S.L.W. On (Secretary of Subcommittees, ICSP), D.R. Arahal (Chair, Judicial Commission), M. Göker (Secretary, Judicial Commission), R.L. Hahnke (Member at Large), M.E. Trujillo (Editor-in-Chief, IJSEM), M. Birbir, C. Brady, H. Christensen, G. Felis, K. Jangid, C. Manaia, M. Picardeau, O. Prakash, P. Rahi, R. Riesco Jarrin, P. Švec, E. Tóth, S. Venter, A. Ventosa and J.P.W. Young. Apologies were received from P. Nielsen (Treasurer, ICSP), B. Duim and W.B. Whitman, who appointed K. Jangid as alternate.

Minute 3. Chair's report on ICSP activities

I.C. Sutcliffe reported on the different activities and achievements of the ICSP since 2020.

Membership

ICSP Life Member R.G.W. Murray has recently passed away. His many contributions to the work of the ICSP were acknowledged.

Two life members, J.P. Euzéby and K.-H. Schleifer, have been appointed.

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Abbreviations: BISMIS, Bergey's International Society for Microbial Systematics; FEMS, Federation of European Microbiological Societies; ICNP, International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes; ICSP, International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes; IJSEM, International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology; IUMS, International Union of Microbiological Societies; SeqCode, Nomenclatural Code for Prokaryotes Described from Sequence Data.

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The International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes (ICNP)

The large backlog of proposals to emend the ICNP that built up post 2008 has been dealt with (see Minute 4). The Chair thanked A. Oren for his outstanding work in bringing this to completion.

The status of the *Cyanobacteria* under the rules of the ICNP has been resolved (see Minute 4).

The rank of phylum was included in the ICNP (see Minute 4). This was followed by the valid publication of 42 names of phyla, and it was emphasized that this was not an ICSP action, but has led to some ill-informed criticism of the ICSP, both on social media and via publications in *Nature Reviews Microbiology* and in *mBio*, to which we have published responses. A. Oren took part in an online Bergey's International Society for Microbial Systematics (BISMiS) dialogue to explain the situation.

The Judicial Commission has cleared the backlog of Requests for Opinions that accumulated in the period 2008–2018, with more than 30 Opinions issued since 2020. For this outstanding effort, massive thanks to D.R. Arahal, M. Göker and all the commissioners. A new class of commissioners has to be elected next year. In addition, two other commissioners wish to end their term. Thus, we will need six volunteers to join the Judicial Commission in 2023.

The International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology (IJSEM)

A new 10-year publishing agreement was signed with the Microbiology Society and International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS). The negotiations also served to improve our contact with IUMS.

M.E. Trujillo was reappointed Editor-in-Chief of the IJSEM for a second 5-year term.

Submissions remain dominated by papers from China (~40%) and the Republic of Korea (15%).

The impact factor remains steady at ~2.7.

'Publish and Read' agreements with the Microbiology Society are increasingly important, but the number of open access articles is still low.

New Instructions for Authors have been published online. To reduce 'salami slicing', authors are encouraged to combine descriptions of taxa from same sampling or experimental series.

Candidatus lists are now being published. I.C. Sutcliffe thanked A. Oren and co-authors. Useful reviews about the *Candidatus* status have been published by M.J. Pallen (in the IJSEM) and A. Oren (in *New Microbes and New Infections*).

G.M. Garrity has retired and been replaced as List Editor by M. Göker. Prof. Garrity has been thanked for his many contributions to the work of the ICSP.

Subcommittees on Taxonomy

There are currently 15 active subcommittees, and one newly formed one (on the *Myxobacteria/Myxococcota*).

I.C. Sutcliffe thanked S.L.W. On, Secretary of Subcommittees, and all the chairs of the subcommittees for their work. S.L.W. On noted that an Editorial on the current status of the subcommittees was published in the IJSEM in 2021.

Openness and outreach

Despite some ill-informed criticisms published in different forums, the Chair asserted his belief that the ICSP acts in an open and transparent way:

- Open email discussions were held regarding introduction of the rank of phylum and the status of the *Cyanobacteria* under the rules of the ICNP.
- The minutes of the monthly meetings of the Executive Board and other reports are posted on the ICSP website in a timely way.
- We used the Slack platform to effectively debate emendations of the ICSP; a general channel is still open on the Slack platform for comments.
- The minutes of the earlier ICSP plenaries, Judicial Commission minutes and subcommittee minutes are published in the IJSEM.
- We thank M. Chuvochina for setting up the ICSP Twitter account: https://twitter.com/ICSP_news.
- The Executive Board has published a response to a critical commentary in *Nature Microbiology* about issues caused by Rule 30 of the ICNP. Problems caused by the Nagoya protocol remain, but we have an active working group to assist those affected.

Financial support for LPSN

As in the past, the ICSP will continue to provide financial support to the List of Prokaryotic names with Standing in Nomenclature (LPSN) in view of the great importance of this database and website for the work of the ICSP and IJSEM.

Challenges ahead and plans for the future

The ICSP intends to organize a session during the 10th FEMS Congress of European Microbiologists in Hamburg in July 2023.

Ongoing debates about introducing new regulations under the Convention on Biological Diversity about use of digital sequence information could be the next major issue.

In view of the ongoing criticism about lack of representativeness and diversity in the ICSP membership, proposals are being to expand the ICSP membership. See Minute 5.

Revision of the ICSP statutes will be necessary to change the membership structure and to further clarify and improve the ways the ICSP, the Judicial Commission and other bodies regulated by the statutes should function.

Minute 4. New revision of the ICNP – outcome and reflections on the ballot

The Editor-in-Chief of the ICNP, A. Oren, presented the progress made toward the publication of the 2022 revision of the Code:

Fourteen years have passed since the ICSP, at its plenary meeting in Istanbul in 2008, approved the previous version of the ICNP. We thank its editors C.T. Parker, B.J. Tindall and G.M. Garrity for overseeing its publication in 2019.

Updating the Code was long overdue in view of the large number of subsequent proposals to emend the General Considerations, Principles, Rules and Recommendations, and Appendices of the Code. In the period 2008–2020, 45 such proposals were published in the IJSEM. Most of those were only recently discussed and voted on by the members of the ICSP, following the adoption of revised statutes in 2019, which transferred responsibility for dealing with proposed emendations from the Judicial Commission of the ICSP to the editorial board of the ICNP.

The editorial board of the 2022 revision of the ICNP consists of A. Oren (Editor-in-Chief), *ex officio* members D.R. Arahal, E.R.B. Moore, R. Rossello-Mora and I.C. Sutcliffe, and co-opted member M. Göker.

The editorial board prepared the proposals for emendation of the Code, which were submitted for balloting among the full and co-opted members of the ICSP, in accordance with its statutes. To comply with Article 4(d) of the statutes of the ICSP that state that the business of the ICSP should be conducted publicly, the voting was preceded by a 6-month period (July–December 2021), announced in IJSEM, during which anyone interested could post comments via the Slack platform. Numerous suggestions and ideas to improve the text of the Code were brought forward during this public discussion and many were incorporated in the current revision.

The ballot on revisions to the ICNP was held 1 April–30 June 2022. A 403-page document was presented that contained the text of the 2008 Revision, the proposed 2022 Revision and explanatory notes. Of the 28 voting members of the ICSP, 26 completed the ballot form. Members were given two options: (1) to endorse the version proposed by the Editorial Board ‘en bloc’, with exception of eight issues for which separate votes were requested. This option was used by 15 voting members. (2) To vote on each proposed change separately. This option was used by 11 voting members.

Based on the outcome of the ballot, the Editorial Board of the ICNP has finalized the 2022 Revision of the ICNP. The document was submitted on 1 August for publication in the IJSEM and accepted for publication on 12 August. It is currently with the typesetters.

Major changes included in the 2022 revision include the addition of the rank of phylum to the ranks covered by the rules of the ICNP (as approved by the ICSP in a separate ballot held in 2021, following a public discussion), and the formal inclusion of the *Cyanobacteria* in the rules of the Code. This change required modification of numerous rules to harmonize the treatment of the nomenclature of the *Cyanobacteria* with the relevant rules of the International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants. This change was also approved by the ICSP in a separate ballot held in 2021, following a public discussion.

Numerous additions have been made in Appendix 9 – Orthography to assist authors in proposing correctly formed names that comply with the rules of the Code.

Appendix 11 has been emended to better explain the provisional status of *Candidatus*. The nomenclature of *Candidatus* taxa is not formally incorporated in the rules of the ICNP and such names have no standing in prokaryote nomenclature. It was noted that a proposal to allow the use of genome (or gene) sequences as nomenclatural types for naming of prokaryotes was rejected by the ICSP in 2020, following a public discussion.

We aimed to shorten and simplify the ICNP where possible. Therefore, we have not reprinted the prefaces to the earlier versions of the Code and have deleted the detailed information about the older versions of the different codes of nomenclature (Appendix 1), the recipients of the van Niel International Prize prior to 2014 (Appendix 12) and activities of the congresses prior to 2019 (Appendix 13). The earlier information is available in the 2008 revision of the ICNP.

The ICNP is a ‘living document’ and we anticipate – indeed welcome – proposals for emendations to further refine it, which should be made following the process outlined in Article 13(b) of the ICSP statutes.

A paper with newly proposed emendations, not published in time to be included in the 2022 Revision of the ICNP (‘Proposals to emend Rules 8, 15, 22, 25a, 30(3)(b), 30(4), 34a and Appendix 7 of the International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes’),

authored by the members of the ICNP editorial board, is now in press in the *IJSEM*. These proposed emendations deal with the following: the nomenclatural type of taxa above genus; the suitability of names published in supplementary material or in papers published on e-print servers for effective publication; the number of culture collection designations to be included in an effective publication of a name of a species or subspecies to qualify for validation of the name; the kinds of restrictions that may be attached to deposits of type strains; and the question whether elevation of a subspecies to the rank of species or lowering of a species to the rank of subspecies establish new combinations.

Minute 5. Discussion of new membership structures

I.C. Sutcliffe presented an overview of the current membership of the ICSP. Membership categories of the ICSP are currently as specified in Article 2a–c of the statutes, which allow for the appointment of Full Member delegates representing IUMS Member Societies, Co-opted delegates and non-voting Life Members. The relatively small membership of ICSP (typically less than 30 voting members) has led to criticisms that we lack appropriate disciplinary and geographic diversity. Noticeably, ICSP has no delegates representing societies in North America, and only one from a South American society and one from an African society. Despite the predominant volume of taxonomic activity in Asia, only three delegates come from eastern Asian societies. We have a statutory requirement (Article 3a) to ‘represent the diversity of interests of different microbiological disciplines on matters concerning the nomenclature of prokaryotes’. Thus, it can be argued that the functioning of ICSP, and its decision-making, will benefit from having a membership that is as broad and diverse as possible, in order to better represent the diversity of interests and priorities of the global systematics community. It was noted that significant changes to our membership structure will require the approval of IUMS and changes to the ICSP statutes.

It was reported that attempts to secure delegates from IUMS Member Societies that lack representation are ongoing, with requests sent by the Executive Secretary to multiple societies lacking delegates. Whilst this will continue, historically this approach has been hampered by (1) difficulty in obtaining an accurate list of Member Societies/contacts from IUMS, and (2) a lack of engagement from the IUMS Member Societies. The attendees were encouraged, through their personal networks, to identify suitable and willing candidates in countries where a Member Society is known to lack a delegate, and then those contacts should be encouraged to ask their IUMS member society to nominate them.

The current mechanism for co-option is detailed in Article 2b of the statutes and requires nomination of candidates with the support of two Full Members, followed by approval by vote of the Full Members. It was noted that it is unclear from Article 2b1 whether or not ‘Proposals for co-opted membership’ can come from outside the ICSP membership, including self-nomination, so long as the proposal is supported by two Full Members. Any members co-opted from September 2022 would only serve until 31 March 2023, as their terms of membership are tied into the same cycle as those for Full Members (Article 2b2). This inherently limits the effectiveness of co-option in the less than 6 months remaining in the current term, although co-options could be renewed. The statutes could be revised to make co-option a more straightforward process, so that it could be more effectively deployed early in the next term. Article 2b1 could be clarified to allow self-nominations (if supported by two Full Members). Moreover, approval of candidates for co-option could be expedited by making this the responsibility of the Executive Board, rather than requiring a vote of the Full Members.

This option was discussed. There was little enthusiasm for the idea of greater use of co-option as a means to expand the number of ICSP members. The idea of having the Executive Board rather than all voting members of the ICSP approve nominations for new co-opted members did not receive much support.

Other Committees (‘ComCofs’) of IUMS operate with entirely different membership structures. For example, the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses has a complex membership structure that permits multiple delegates from a particular country, whereas membership of the International Commission on the Taxonomy of Fungi ‘is by invitation of the Commission’, which seems equivalent to co-option of all members. Both these examples indicate that IUMS are amenable to membership structures distinct from that of the ICSP membership scheme.

The ‘1 IUMS Member Society=1 delegate’ formula in part explains why we are not as representative as we should be: a large Society (e.g., the Chinese Society for Microbiology) has the same number of delegates as a much smaller Society. The ICSP statutes could be revised to amend the ‘1 IUMS Member Society=1 delegate’ formula such that IUMS Member Societies could be permitted to delegate more than one member to ICSP, proportionate to their size. Limitations of this model are likely to be (1) our ability to gather accurate information from IUMS about sizes of their Member Societies, although we can ask the societies themselves for this information, and (2) whether IUMS Member Societies will actually delegate more than one representative.

Discussion of these options did not lead to a clear consensus. Some participants favoured the idea of increasing the number of delegates proportionate to the Member Society size, although others did not.

Suggestions were invited as to additional mechanisms that could improve the diversity of the ICSP membership.

Minute 6. Questions and answers with the members

There was no other business and there were no further questions.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.40 CET.

Minutes prepared by A. Oren on 13 October 2022

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE ON SYSTEMATICS OF PROKARYOTES. MINUTES OF THE OPEN PLENARY MEETING, THURSDAY 14 DECEMBER 2023, VIA ZOOM**Minute 1. Call to order**

ICSP Chair E.R.B. Moore called the meeting to order at 09.00 CET.

Minute 2. Record of attendance

The meeting was attended by E.R.B. Moore (Chair, ICSP), A. Oren (Executive Secretary, ICSP), S.L.W. On (Secretary of Subcommittees, ICSP), M.A. Amoozegar, D.R. Arahal (Chair, Judicial Commission), M. Göker (Secretary, Judicial Commission), R.L. Hahnke (Member at Large), M. Sakamoto (Member at Large), M. Birbir, J.P. Bowman, R.R. de la Haba, B. Duim, M. de Fátima Fiore, M. Gugger, T. Hauer, C. Hugo, M. Kostovski, P. Kuhnert, P.A. Kumar, J.-S. Lee, W.-J. Li, C. Manaia, M. del C. Montero Calasanz, A. Nemeč, P. Nielsen, M.J. Pallen, O. Prakash, Ch. Sasikala, T.N.R. Srinivas, M.B. Stott, I.C. Sutcliffe, P. Švec, A. Tánčsics, P. Vandamme, S. Venter, A. Ventosa, S. Ventura, A. Wilmotte and J.P.W. Young. Apologies were received from H. Christensen, R.R. Colwell, S. Dedysh, X. Dong, S. Emler, P.-E. Fournier, J. Overmann, D. Wagner, W.B. Whitman and B.A. Whitton.

Minute 3. Updates by members of the Executive Board

E.R.B. Moore (Chair of the Executive Board) explained that for recent ballots sent to ICSP voting members, many members did not return the ballot forms – typically, only 60–70% of voting members bother to vote on any given issue. He called upon the members to vote when requested; an ‘abstain’ vote is preferred over no vote at all. Furthermore, he proposed to request the Executive Board to assess the voting records of ICSP members. Members who chronically do not vote on ICSP issues would be reminded to participate or to resign in favour of alternative members from the national societies who would be more active.

A. Oren (Executive Secretary and ICNP Editor in Chief) presented an update on the preparation of a revision of the statutes of the ICSP, a process started many months ago. A final draft of the proposed revision, including the text of the current version approved in 2019, will be discussed by the Executive Board in January and prepared for publication in the IJSEM. After publication, there will be a 6-month period of public discussion of the document on the Slack channel, to be followed by a ballot of the voting members of the ICSP to accept or reject the proposed revisions.

E.R.B. Moore reported on the presentations and the roundtable discussion about the ICNP and the SeqCode (Nomenclatural Code for Prokaryotes Described from Sequence Data) during the BISMIS conference held in Guangzhou in November. No solutions to the conflicts between the ICNP and the SeqCode emerged, but discussions were started and will be continued in search for possible solutions. A paper entitled ‘The best of both worlds: a proposal for further integration of *Candidatus* names into the International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes’ will soon be published in the IJSEM, and can be a starting point toward a solution of the problems.

S.L.W. On (Secretary for Subcommittees on Taxonomy) reported that two new subcommittees on taxonomy were recently established: the subcommittee on the taxonomy of *Myxobacteria* (*Myxococcota*), and the subcommittee on the taxonomy of *Borrelia*. A meeting of the chairs and secretaries of all subcommittees on taxonomy was held on 25 October 2022 and a summary was published. On 6 November, S.L.W. On sent a letter to the Chairs and Secretaries of all subcommittees to clarify the position of the ICSP concerning the SeqCode initiative and make them aware of the rules of the ICSP statutes and rules concerning the mandate of the subcommittees, as defined in Article 6 (5) of the statutes. This letter is available at www.the-icsp.org/images/reports/ICSP_letter_to_all_subcommittees_final%20161123.pdf.

C. Manaia (Vice-Chair and Chair of the Publications Committee) reported on the meeting of the Publications Committee held on 28 November 2023, with the participation of a number of staff members of the Microbiology Society, which is the Publisher of IJSEM. One of the topics discussed was the recurring typesetting problems, especially the errors introduced by the typesetters in the reference sections of articles. The Microbiology Society staff will follow this up with the company responsible for the typesetting.

E.R.B. Moore reported that the impact factor of the IJSEM is 2.69, i.e., in the quartile for the category Microbiology. Efforts to increase the impact factor are ongoing and suggestions are welcome.

The working group on education and outreach had nothing to report.

E.R.B. Moore gave an update about the website of the ICSP (www.the-icsp.org). M. Göker now assists with the updating of the website. E.R.B. Moore urged ICSP members to check out the website and to identify any mistakes, as well as any issues that are not posted but should be. Suggestions for improvement of the website are welcome.

For more than a year, M. Chuvochina manages the ICSP Twitter/X account. News items related to the ICSP are posted there, but the site was not used for discussions. Those who use the social media are invited to look at the site (@ICSP_news).

E.R.B. Moore explained the efforts of the working group on type strain accessibility in view of the fact that more than fifty countries have established specific and documented restrictions on the distribution of their genetic resources. The IJSEM editors need to know these restrictions when handing manuscripts describing novel taxa. Recently a problem emerged as France published new restrictions. With the help of researchers in France, the issue was clarified: it appeared that the new regulations require registration but do not include restrictions in the availability of type material. An editorial will soon be published in the IJSEM to explain the new requirements. It is anticipated that the policies of France, regarding their genetic resources, could serve as a valuable model for other countries. Such a policy would serve to protect the countries' genetic resources and establish the regulations that would enable researchers in those countries to allow access and benefit-sharing for type strains of new taxa. The problems with the restricted availability of type strains from India are ongoing since the early 2000s. Recently we learnt that the Biodiversity Authority of India agreed to consider a solution, but this will take more time. The US National Parks Service imposes special material transfer agreements for strains isolated from the parks. Such strains can be deposited in the ATCC and the CCOS collections. Whether the 'certificates' issued by these collections satisfy the demands of the ICNP is questionable; this is an ongoing issue.

M. Göker reported on the recently established *Ad Hoc* Committee on Mitigating Changes in Prokaryotic Nomenclature to clarify the nature of nomenclature changes, mainly for genera and species, to assist practitioners and stakeholders to deal with the changes. The *ad hoc* committee will contact journals, regulatory agencies, etc. Anyone who is interested to participate in the activities of the ad hoc committee should contact M. Göker.

D.R. Arahal (Chair of the Judicial Commission) presented a report on the activities of the Judicial Commission since the October 2022 plenary meeting of the ICSP. There is no backlog of Requests for Opinion. Previous requests have resulted in a number of Judicial Opinions 123–129. The minutes of the meeting of the Judicial Commission on 27 July 2022 were published, as was a document providing guidelines for interpreting the ICNP and for preparing a Request for an Opinion.

The current term of the Judicial Commission (September 2023–August 2026) consists of the following classes:

- 28th Class (2023–2032): M. del C. Montero Calasanz, P. Vandamme, A. Ventosa and S. Ventura;
- 27th Class (2020–2029): D.R. Arahal, M. Chuvochina, M. Göker and C.T. Parker;
- 26th Class (2017–2026): C.T. Bull, H. Christensen, C.A. Dunlap and J.P.W. Young. C.T. Bull, J.P.W. Young and C.A. Dunlap replaced resigning commissioners P.-E. Fournier, R. Rossello-Mora and K.T. Konstantinidis, respectively.

The appointed officers are D. R. Arahal (Chair), H. Christensen (Vice-Chair) and M. Göker (Secretary).

P. Nielsen (Treasurer) reported that the financial state of the ICSP is good. The ICSP receives an annual sum from the Microbiology Society for the publication of the IJSEM in accordance with the publication agreement, which recently was renewed for 10 years. The major expenses are refund of IJSEM Editor travel expenses to attend scientific meetings and promote the journal there. The nomenclature reviewers can also claim travel expenses refund as long as the financial state of the ICSP allows it.

The Microbiology Society provides an annual payment to the ICSP. The ICSP is able to use the funds as determined by the ICSP. The ICSP has proposed to support the LPSN with annual payments. The details for the administration of this support are being organized.

M. Göker announced that LPSN is now included in the list of Global Core Biodata Resources. He thanked the ICSP for the ongoing financial support.

Minute 4. Open discussion

M.J. Pallen commented that, if LPSN is funded by the Microbiology Society, all its data should be open and available to all. M. Göker replied that LPSN resources are open to all, but for technical reasons LPSN does not allow screen scraping of the website. The LPSN Application Programming Interface does not currently provide all the information available on the website. However, LPSN will continue to expand the types of data available through the Application Programming Interface. I.C. Sutcliffe explained that the agreement is between LPSN and the ICSP, not with the Microbiology Society, and that the ICSP chooses how to spend the money received from the Society. The NamesForLife website (www.namesforlife.com), to which the IJSEM papers are still linked, is no longer maintained and the company formerly operated by G.M. Garrity and C.T. Parker ceased operations effective 31 December 2022. I.C. Sutcliffe has alerted the Microbiology Society in the past and E.R.B. Moore will follow up on this with the Microbiology Society, which is the publisher of the IJSEM.

A. Ventosa proposed ideas on how to improve the impact factor of the IJSEM. He commented that the word 'evolutionary' is part of the name of the journal, but that only few papers on evolutionary microbiology are published. He suggested that we might invite experts on evolutionary microbiology to contribute papers and review articles. A. Oren replied that he and F.A. Rainey had tried this in the past, with very little success. Due to the relatively low impact factor of the journal, authors prefer to submit their review papers to other journals. A paper about the development and the latest updates from LPSN is also very welcome.

M. del C. Montero-Calasanz complained about the low quality of many taxonomic description papers published in the IJSEM, which contain a minimum of properties for the description of a new species based on a single isolate, with hardly any analysis performed on the sequenced genome. Still, such papers fulfil all requirements of the ICNP and the Microbiology Society is not interested in reducing the number of articles published in the journal. She emphasised that being classified as a Q3 journal significantly restricts researchers from certain countries in their ability to publish their work in the IJSEM. E.R.B. Moore reinforced this observation by personal experience, wherein Impact Factors are not directly important in Sweden, but his Postdoctoral Researcher and PhD Student, both from Spain, cannot use publications in Q3 and Q4 journals for their CV in applications for national funding or job applications.

M.J. Pallen commented that impact factors should be irrelevant; however, in many countries they are still considered important. O. Prakash replied that, in his opinion, impact factors remain important. Improving the quality of papers published in the IJSEM will lead to a higher impact factor and make the journal more attractive to authors.

M. Gugger explained that bioinformatician colleagues at the Institut Pasteur in Paris advise its scientific collaborators to publish descriptions of new prokaryotic taxa in the IJSEM, so that the names are validly published in the journal. A. Oren pointed out that valid publication of names is also possible by inclusion of names published elsewhere in the bimonthly Validation Lists.

The majority of the discussion period of the Plenary Meeting was devoted to the issue of the impact of the IJSEM and suggestions on how to improve that.

Note: The Chair received several e-mails with comments about this issue after the meeting. He will compile all comments and circulate those among the ICSP and also with M.E. Trujillo, Editor-in-Chief of the IJSEM.

The next online plenary meeting of the ICSP is tentatively scheduled for May 2024, and should be held at a time that is more convenient to members residing in the western hemisphere.

The chair closed the meeting at 10.15 CET.

Minutes prepared by A. Oren on 15 December 2023

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The author received no specific grant from any funding agency.

Acknowledgement

I thank members of the ICSP Executive Board and other participants in the meetings for helpful comments.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.