



International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes

Executive Board Meeting 1st July 2021 Redacted minutes

Chair:
I. C. SUTCLIFFE
Northumbria University
U.K.

Vice-Chair:
E. R. B. MOORE
University of Gothenburg
Sweden

Executive Secretary:
A. OREN
Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Israel

Secretary for Subcommittees:
S. L. W. ON
Lincoln University
New Zealand

Treasurer:
P. NIELSEN
Novozymes, Copenhagen
Denmark

Members at Large:

R. HAHNKE
Leibniz Institute DSMZ
Germany

Y. SHOUCHE
National Centre for Microbial
Resource
India

**Members of the Judicial
Committee**

Chair:
D.R. ARAHAL
University of Valencia
Spain

Vice-Chair:
R. ROSSELLÓ-MÓRA
Mediterranean Institute for
Advanced Studies
Illes Balears Spain

Secretary:
M. GÖKER
Leibniz Institute DSMZ
Germany

Minute 1. Call to order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9.00 a.m. UK time.

Minute 2. Record of attendance

The following members of the Executive Board participated: I.C. Sutcliffe (Chair), E.R.B. Moore (Vice-Chair), A. Oren (Executive Secretary), P. Nielsen (Treasurer), R. Hahnke (Member-at-Large), Y. Shouche (Member-at-Large), R. Rosselló-Móra (Vice-Chair JC), and M. Göker (Secretary JC). Apologies were received S.L.W. On (Secretary Subcommittees) and D.R. Arahal (Chair JC)

Minute 3. Minutes of the 27th May 2021 meeting of the Executive Board

The draft minutes of the 27th May 2021 meeting were approved with a minor change proposed by M. Göker. A. Oren will distribute the minutes to the members of the ICSP, the Judicial Commission, and chairs of the Subcommittees on Taxonomy, and he will send a copy to E.R.B. Moore to be posted on the ICSP website.

Minute 4. Matters arising/Action points from previous meetings

- A. Oren has forwarded the minutes of the 29st April 2021 Executive Board meeting to all members of the ICSP, the Judicial Commissions and the chairs of the Subcommittees on Taxonomy. E.R.B. Moore has posted these minutes on the ICSP website.

- S.L.W. On reported by email that work on an editorial for publication in the IJSEM to present the status of the Subcommittees on Taxonomy is ongoing and that some progress was made.

- R. Hahnke and S.L.W. On (by email) reported that the planned letter to be sent to colleagues involved in prokaryotic taxonomy, encouraging them to get involved in ICSP-related activities, was not yet prepared.

- Y. Shouche reported that inquiries with the World Federation of Culture Collections (WFCC) as to whether the current system of deposition of type strains causes problems due to the cost involved in processing of cultures and authentication are ongoing; he will bring the issue up at the upcoming meeting of the WFCC.

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- E.R.B. Moore reported that inquiries with the European Culture Collection Organisation (ECCO) as to whether the current system of deposition of type strains causes problems due to the cost involved in processing of cultures and authentication are ongoing. Gerard Verkleij, President of the ECCO Board, reported that they are going to discuss the matter within the Board and will get back with a response.
- E.R.B. Moore reported earlier that Prof. Paul Hoskisson at the University of Strathclyde in the UK, has succeeded Jodi Lindsay as Chair of Publishing Panel of the Microbiology Society. The correspondence from Paul Hoskisson to Martha Trujillo has not been circulated, as this correspondence was considered private.
- E.R.B. Moore has received a smart card of NatWest Bank sent by I.C. Sutcliffe.
- Attempts by I.C. Sutcliffe and P. Nielsen to obtain the authorization code for the NatWest bank account from W.B. Whitman are still ongoing.
- E.R.B. Moore reported that he expects to have a first draft for a response of the ICSP to the 'SeqCode' initiative ready in August. He will then further work on this with M. Göker, S.L.W. On and A. Oren, to have a document ready to be submitted to ISME Journal in September.
- M. Göker is still working on a document requesting funding of LPSN by the ICSP.
- I.C. Sutcliffe and A. Oren have prepared the Slack platform for the open discussion on the emendation of the ICNP, and E.R.B. Moore has uploaded all relevant files on the ICSP website.
- Suggestions (theme/proposed speakers) for the ICSP symposium at IUMS 2022 were discussed – see Minute 5.
- The question whether nomination of van Niel International Prize candidate(s) for 2022 is appropriate was discussed – see Minute 6.
- An action from Minute 13 (members to review the FAOMB meeting Sponsorship Prospectus pdf sent by email by S.L.W. On) was noted to have been inadvertently overlooked. This will be carried forward to the next meeting.

Minute 5. ICSP-sponsored session at IUMS 2022

Ideas for an ICSP-sponsored session at IUMS 2022, to be held in Rotterdam, were discussed. The 2020 van Niel International Prize lecture by Tanya Woyke can be part of that session. Among the ideas of topics suggested for a symposium of 3-4 talks are: (1) the launching of the 2022 revision of the ICNP; (2) the naming of cyanobacteria under the ICNP and the ICN (proposed by R. Hahnke); (3) the recognition of phyla in the ICNP; (4) Type strains, MTAs and the Nagoya Protocol (proposed by E.R.B. Moore); (5) evaluation of the value of traditional taxonomic methods in the era of genomics; (6) a roundtable discussion about relationship of the ICNP and the 'SeqCode'. I.C. Sutcliffe will summarize the ideas and discuss these with Birgitta Duim, member of the national organizing committee of IUMS 2020 and the Dutch delegate to the ICSP.

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Minute 6. Nominations for the 2022 van Niel International Prize

The Executive Board discussed whether nominations should be invited now for a 2022 van Niel International Prize. It was felt that it may be too early, as Tanya Woyke will give the 2020 prize lecture in 2022. In the past, the prize was generally awarded once every four years, typically in alignment with plenary meetings (see Appendix 12 of the ICNP). Therefore, it was felt that 2022 may be too early. We may consider nominating candidates to the University of Queensland for a prize to be awarded at the FEMS conference in Hamburg in 2023.

Minute 7. Recommendation of reviewers and the use of Greek in etymologies in the LPSN site

A. Oren and others have spotted several new features in the LPSN website that may assist authors, editors and production staff of the IJSEM and other journals that publish taxonomic descriptions:

- 'Recommended reviewers for taxonomic proposals'. For many genera, LPSN now lists 'recommended reviewers'. M. Göker reported that these recommendations are based on a number of criteria including (1) recommending the leading authors of recent publications dealing with the taxon; (2) selecting specialists on the taxon while avoiding recommendation of authors who have published on many disparate groups of organisms; (3) filtering out researchers who explicitly do not want to be listed. The tool depends on the availability of data and could be improved in the near future once more specific information becomes available. A. Oren commented that in multiple cases the scientists listed as 'recommended reviewers' are necessarily the most appropriate ones, and he also spotted cases of 'recommended reviewers' who in his opinion are unqualified to properly review papers. I.C. Sutcliffe also raised concerns about the appropriateness of reviewers recommended for some taxa. The danger also exists that some experts may be overloaded with requests to review papers. It is better to change the term 'recommended reviewers' to 'potential reviewers' or similar. M. Göker mentioned that these notes can easily be rephrased. For taxonomic groups for which subcommittees on taxonomy exist, the members of a subcommittee are not necessarily listed as 'recommended reviewers'. I.C. Sutcliffe will update S.L.W. On, who should then contact the chairs of the taxonomic subcommittees and ask each to define their frame of reference (i.e., a summary which taxa they have responsibility for). That way LPSN could flag the expertise of the taxonomic subcommittee on the relevant taxon pages.
- The etymology lines in LPSN now also use Greek characters for Greek words and word elements used in genus names and specific epithets. A. Oren noted that authors have started to copy such Greek words in the etymologies given in their manuscripts submitted to the IJSEM and to other journals. He explained that this is confusing, makes the etymology lines unnecessary long, and may cause problems to the typesetters. Most authors who copy Greek from the LPSN site are probably unable to spot errors that may have been introduced during the typesetting process.

The curators of LPSN decide on the content of the site, the ICSP cannot control it, but it can make recommendations, if necessary. It was decided that A. Oren and M. Göker will further discuss these issues and report to the Publications Committee.

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Minute 8. Report from the Judicial Commission

M. Göker reported that the Judicial Commission has prepared draft opinions for 10 requests, including merged requests in cases where multiple requests dealt with the same topic. The Judicial Commission is currently trying to convene an online meeting in July or the beginning of August and intends to publish the minutes of that meeting and the opinions issued since Opinion 96 (2014).

Minute 9. Report from the Publications Committee

E.R.B. Moore reported that on 17th June a meeting took place of Rob Samson (IUMS Secretary), Gaynor Redvers-Mutton of the Microbiology Society, M.E. Trujillo (Editor-in-Chief, IJSEM), I.C. Sutcliffe, and E.R.B. Moore. All the points of the Memorandum of Understanding prepared by the Microbiology Society and ICSP were agreed upon in principle by R.A. Samson. G. Redvers-Mutton has sent a brief financial account about the journal to IUMS to supplement the Memorandum of Understanding. R.A. Samson will report to the board of IUMS and then contact ICSP and Microbiology Society regarding next steps. The negotiations for renewing the contract with the MS for continuing publication of the IJSEM – for December 31, 2021 – seem to be on schedule.

Minute 10. Update from IJSEM

E.R.B. Moore reported that the new impact factor of the IJSEM was just released: it increased from 2.415 to 2.747. E.R.B. Moore will prepare a draft letter to the editor-in-chief, M.E. Trujillo, the editorial board, and the production staff at the Microbiology Society to congratulate them on behalf of the ICSP Executive Board.

Minute 11. Update from the Editorial Board of the ICNP

A. Oren reported that the public discussion on the draft revision of the ICNP has just started. Files detailing sections of the current version of the ICNP ('2008 revision'), the proposed new version, and comments and explanations are now available on the Slack platform, where the online discussion forum will take place, as well as on the ICSP website. The editorial announcing the beginning of the discussion was published on 30th June (Oren A, Arahal DA, Rosselló-Morá R, Moore ERB. Preparing a revision of the International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes. *Int J Syst Evol Microbiol* 2021;71:004598). A. Oren thanked the IJSEM editor-in-chief, the editorial office, and the production staff for the special effort to publish this document in time. The announcement of the outcome of the ballot about the inclusion of the rank of phylum in the ICNP was also published (Oren A, Arahal DA, Rosselló-Morá R, Moore ERB. Emendation of Rules 5b, 8, 15 and 22 of the International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes to include the rank of phylum. *Int J Syst Evol Microbiol* 2021;71:004851), and the announcement of the outcome of the ballot about the status of the cyanobacteria in the ICNP was accepted for publication on 29th June (Oren A, Arahal DA, Rosselló-Morá R, Moore ERB. Emendation of General Consideration 5 and Rules 18a, 24a, and 30 of the International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes to resolve the status of the Cyanobacteria in the prokaryotic nomenclature). I.C. Sutcliffe has notified all members of the ICSP, its Judicial Commission, and the chairs of the Subcommittees on Taxonomy of the start of the public discussion in Slack and invited them into

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the 'workspace'. Many have already logged in to the Slack platform.

On 17th June, A. Oren was contacted by Vincent Demoulin (Liège), one of the editors of past editions of the International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants (ICN), who asked for advice on a taxonomic question relating to a cyanobacterial genus. A. Oren used the opportunity to update V. Demoulin about the recent attempts to resolve the status of the cyanobacteria under the ICN and the result of the ICSP ballot. V. Demoulin will report to the General Committee responsible for governance of the ICN.

Minute 12. Update from the Secretary of Subcommittees

S.L.W. On reported by email that some progress was made with the preparation of the "Status of the subcommittees" editorial, and that he had entered into dialogue regarding the formation of new subcommittees.

Minute 13. Treasurer's update

I.C. Sutcliffe and P. Nielsen reported that the arrangements with NatWest Bank to transfer the account to the new signatories are still not finalized, but progress is being made.

Minute 14. Update from the working group on type strain accessibility

E.R.B. Moore commented that we may have reached an impasse, as countries imposing restrictions on the distribution of biological type material may accept MTA-like agreements for further distribution. Additionally, Culture Collections impose MTA restrictions, in some cases, typically on 'commercial applications'. Such restrictions are incompatible with Rule 30 of the ICNP. Rules and guidelines to show what MTAs are acceptable are urgently needed. The need for permission from a third party (e.g., a governmental agency) to obtain access to type strains is likely an unacceptable restriction. There seem to be two options: 1) Convince the authorities of countries to allow unrestricted access to genetic resources originating from their countries; 2) Change the ICNP to allow for some restrictions of nomenclatural type material. Y. Shouche added that it might be important to make special provisions for commercial vs. non-commercial use of type strains.

A. Oren reported about the recent publication of two articles in the IJSEM describing new species isolated in India. The type strains have been deposited in two culture collections outside India and the accompanying documentation did not state any special restrictions placed on their distribution, even though it can be assumed that permission is needed from the Biodiversity Authority of India. Another such paper is currently being handled by one of the editors of the IJSEM. Requests for validation of names of new species from India, effectively published in other journals, are regularly submitted to the list editors of the IJSEM. The way such requests were handled in the past was not always consistent. A. Oren had received a letter from an Indian author who rightfully complained that the system is not consistent, and he does not understand why his validation request was denied if the IJSEM publishes original papers from India based on type material for which access is restricted.

It was agreed that it is the responsibility of authors to provide proof of availability, but noted

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that the information supplied by authors is not always complete and reliable. E.R.B. Moore will clarify to IJSEM editor-in-chief M.E. Trujillo that it is the duty of the scientists/authors of manuscripts submitted to the IJSEM to prove that the type material described is available if the IJSEM Editors or Editorial Office ask for this information to be provided. R. Hahnke commented that it may be possible to accept papers from India for publication and include the names in validation lists, while accepting the risk that the names will later be found illegitimate.

India is not the only problematic country. R. Hahnke commented that the DSMZ maintains a list of problem countries, but this list cannot be shared at this stage. He will consult the legal advisors of the DSMZ to inquire to what extent this information can be shared.

It was recommended that this issue should be further discussed in the working group on type strain availability. The working group needs, as soon as possible, to present clear instructions for editors who handle taxonomic description papers for the IJSEM and other journals, and the list editors of the IJSEM, as to how to deal with newly proposed names of species from India and other problematic countries.

Minute 15. Working group on Education & Outreach

R. Hahnke has written a letter to all members of the working group, and he will report at the next ICSP Executive Board meeting.

Closing matters

Minute 16. Other business

There was no other business.

Date of next meeting: **Thursday July 29th, 9 am UK time**

Minute 17. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11.30.

Minutes prepared by A. Oren – 4 July 2021

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Action points:

- A. Oren, to forward the minutes of the 27th May 2021 meeting to all members of the ICSP, the Judicial Commissions and the chairs of the Subcommittees on Taxonomy, and send a copy to E.R.B. Moore to be posted on the ICSP website.
- All members to review the FAOMB meeting Sponsorship Prospectus pdf sent by email by S.L.W. On (29th April 2021)

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- S.L.W. On, to complete the preparation of an editorial for publication in the IJSEM to present the status of the Subcommittees on Taxonomy.
- R. Hahnke and S.L.W. On, to prepare a letter to be sent to colleagues involved in prokaryotic taxonomy, encouraging them to get involved in ICSP-related activities.
- Y. Shouche, to inquire with the World Federation of Culture Collections (WFCC) whether the current system of deposition of type strains causes problems due to the cost involved in processing of cultures and authentication.
- I.C. Sutcliffe and P. Nielsen, to obtain the authorization code for the NatWest bank account from W.B. Whitman.
- E.R.B. Moore, to prepare a first draft for a response of the ICSP to the 'SeqCode' initiative, to be completed by M. Göker, S.L.W. On and A. Oren no later than August, to be submitted to ISME Journal in September, after approval by the ICSP Executive Board. Comments will be invited from the ICSP membership.
- I.C. Sutcliffe, to summarize ideas for an ICSP-sponsored session at IUMS 2022 and discuss those with Birgitta Duim.
- I.C. Sutcliffe, to update S.L.W. On, who should then contact the chairs of the taxonomic subcommittees and ask each to define their frame of reference (i.e., a summary of which taxa they have responsibility for) so that LPSN can be updated to flag the expertise of the taxonomic subcommittee on the relevant taxon pages.
- A. Oren and M. Göker, to discuss features of the LPSN website relevant to editors and production staff of the IJSEM and other journals that publish taxonomic proposals, and to report to the Publications Committee.
- E.R.B. Moore, to write a letter to M.E. Trujillo, editor-in-chief of the IJSEM, and the production staff at the Microbiology Society to congratulate them on behalf of the ICSP Executive Board for the improved impact factor.
- E.R.B. Moore, to clarify to M.E. Trujillo, editor-in-chief of the IJSEM, that a decision by the EB-ICSP that it is the duty of the authors of manuscripts submitted to the IJSEM to prove, as necessary, that the type material described is available. It was noted that some cases have arisen in which certificates or confirmation of deposit and accessibility are not adequate.
- R. Hahnke, to consult the legal advisors of the DSMZ to inquire to what extent the list of countries that impose restrictions to the availability of type material, compiled by the DSMZ, can be shared.
- Working group on type strain accessibility, to provide as soon as possible clear instructions for editors who handle taxonomic description papers for the IJSEM and other journals and the list editors of the IJSEM how to deal with newly proposed names of species from India and other countries with restrictions.