



Press release

Launch of EU Project MIBIREM—Innovative Toolbox for Microbiome-based Soil Remediation

Vienna, 25 October 2022 – The EU-funded MIBIREM project was recently launched to develop a unique toolbox for microbiome-based soil remediation on contaminated sites. With its innovative solutions, MIBIREM aims to clean up severely contaminated sites across Europe which pose a risk to humans and the environment.

In Europe, there are currently 324,000 severely contaminated sites, such as mines, landfills or petrol stations. Conventional remediation technologies to clean contaminated soil are often too expensive and technically demanding. Microbiomes have high potential to improve bio-based processes in the bio-based industry. In soil and groundwater, they can degrade organic contaminants in a process called bioremediation.

Bioremediation uses living organisms, mostly microbes and bacteria, to remove contaminants such as cyanides from the environment. Like the microbiome in the gut, that supports the body in the digestion of food, microbiomes can produce enzymes that degrade organic contaminants in soil and groundwater.

The MIBIREM project will use the potential of microbiomes for soil bioremediation of contaminated sites. MIBIREM will create and apply a unique toolbox to identify, analyse, cultivate and upscale microbiomes for bioremediation environmental applications. With its toolbox, the project will provide innovative methods to improve the functions of microbiomes in degrading contaminants in soil and groundwater. By testing the improved microbiomes under real field conditions in selected sites, MIBIREM aims to pave the way for long-term upscaling of microbiome-based bioremediation.

As the MIBIREM Scientific Coordinator of AIT – the Austrian Institute of Technology, Thomas Reichenauer summarizes: *“With MIBIREM, we want to emphasise the importance of microbiomes for the bioremediation of contaminated sites. The resulting MIBIREM toolbox shall help to better exploit remediating microbiomes in the future.”*

First project meeting at AIT in Vienna

MIBIREM is a collaborative European project across the fields of natural sciences, engineering and technology with 11 partners from 6 EU countries, funded under the European Union’s Horizon Europe Programme. The project brings together state-of-the-art microbiome science research centres with leading companies to take up the challenge of cleaning up Europe’s contaminated sites through microbiome-based soil bioremediation.

The project was formally launched on October 1, while its first meeting took place from 19th to 21st October 2022 in Vienna, at the headquarters of the scientific coordinator AIT. Representatives from the 11 partners from 6 EU member states - Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands - participated in the meeting to set the basis of this ground-breaking research project. MIBIREM will speed up innovation in soil bioremediation to benefit humans and the environment, as well as contribute to reaching Europe’s environmental goals for soil health and food.

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Fist consortium meeting at the Austrian Institute of Technology-AIT on October 19, 2022 in Vienna

RTDS Group, an Austrian SME, leads the overall MIBIREM project coordination - their sixth EU project coordination role. Stephen Webb - RTDS CEO, says that *“the MIBIREM Consortium is ideal in the mix of disciplines and co-involvement of the private and public sectors. Without the committed company investment in this project, the research would remain in the lab. I am optimistic that the MIBIREM consortium will pave the way for effective and affordable soil bioremediation as an outcome”*.

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More information on MIBIREM:

<https://twitter.com/mibirem>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/mibirem/>

<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101059260>

Project Partners:

1. RTDS - VEREIN ZUR FORDERUNG DER KOMMUNIKATION UND VERMITTLUNG VON FORSCHUNG, TECHNOLOGIE UND INNOVATION (RTDS VEREIN, ENGL. RTDS ASSOCIATION) - Austria
2. AIT - AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GMBH- Austria
3. UNIVERSITEIT HASSELT -Belgium
4. CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE CNRS- France
5. UNIVERSITEIT GENT- Belgium
6. SENSATEC GMBH- Germany
7. ALTAR- France
8. DND BIOTECH SRL-Italy
9. UNIVERSITEIT UTRECHT-Netherlands
10. UNIVERSITA DI PISA- Italy
11. TAUW BV- Netherlands

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