

The European Astrobiology Institute – a new pan-European initiative in the field

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In this presentation we will give an update about the status of the preparation of the new European Astrobiology Institute.

Mission: The European Astrobiology Institute (EAI) will be a consortium of European research and higher education institutions and organisations as well as other stakeholders aiming to carry out research, training, outreach and dissemination activities in astrobiology in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

Objectives: The EAI will have the following aims:

- Perform ground-breaking research on key scientific questions in astrobiology requiring a cooperative interdisciplinary approach.
- Disseminate high-quality results of these efforts effectively in the scientific community
- Provide interdisciplinary training for students and early career scientists in astrobiology
- Engage in education on astrobiology on all levels
- Liaise with industry to foster collaborate on technological developments that are relevant to astrobiology research and beneficial to Europe
- Coordinate outreach activities of European astrobiologists to the general public, industry and all other relevant stakeholders
- Act as advisory body and provide high-quality expertise to European research organisations and decision makers in Europe
- Ensure the necessary financial means to carry out these activities through a coordinated approach to European funding agencies

Proposed activities of the EAI: To achieve the above-mentioned aims, the following activities are planned by the EAI:

- Foster interdisciplinary research projects in the field, especially by early career scientists
- Hold high-level general conferences in astrobiology as well as smaller workshops to provide a forum to discuss and plan innovative research projects
- Enable and facilitate access to European research infrastructures and field sites for astrobiologists and organise expeditions to such sites
- Provide a comprehensive multidisciplinary European astrobiology training for students and early career scientists offering both basic and specialised training events in the field as well as training in generic skills

(proposal writing, planning of scientific projects) and a mentoring programme

- Organise web-streamed seminars by leading scientists in astrobiology, and also provide an interface (web-based tools) to collect and share astrobiology lectures
- Create a network for astrobiology education and provide training material for basic, secondary and higher education in Europe
- Produce high quality reference works (e.g. the Encyclopedia of Astrobiology)
- Create and effectively promote excellent outreach material in cooperation with entities engaged in public education (museums, schools and adult training centres)
- Promote contacts to media and ensure high quality coverage of astrobiology-related European research by maintaining an expert pool which journalists can contact
- Use the wide interest of the general public to coordinate and promote involvement of citizen scientists in astrobiology research projects
- Create a team for liaison between research and industry with representatives on both sides
- Approach and inform decision makers in governmental and non-governmental organisations about astrobiology research in Europe.
- Formulate and continuously update a long-term planning of a research strategy in astrobiology for the European Research Area.
- Coordinate the approach to funding agencies to finance the activities of EAI and astrobiology research in Europe
- Include both “top level researchers” and early career scientists in all activities.
- Act as a strong voice for the European astrobiology community
- Collaborate with astrobiology networks and institutes outside Europe Area.

Current state of preparation: An Interim Board was formed consisting of members and employees of the main stakeholders in this field in the European Research Area (ESA, ESF, ISSI, German Aerospace Centre, CNRS, CNES, INAF, Europlanet, EANA, etc.) to prepare the creation of the EAI. The **first General Assembly** of the EAI will take place in **Liblice, Czech Republic** from 28-30 May 2019. See www.europeanastrobiology.eu for further information.