EIC ELMs Portfolio

Deliverable 9.3

Portfolio's Dissemination and Communication Activities RP1

Project Number: 101071145

Project Acronym: FUNGATERIA

Project title: Enlisting synthetic fungal-bacteria consortia to produce multi-cellular mycelium-based ELMs with computational capability.

Project start: 01 November 2022

Project duration: 48 months

European Innovation Council

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DELIVERABLE FACTSHEET

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08/08/2023	Michela Candotti	Drafted the Communication WG Contribution
22/08/2023	Ha Pham	Drafted the Technology WG Contribution
04/01/2024	PA (KADK)	Clarification added to section 3.1.5 regarding the need for European focused communication of the documentary project

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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GLOSSARY

- 3Rs Replacement, Reduction and Refinement
- ELMs Engineered Living Materials
- TBU To be updated
- WG Working Group

1 Contribution from the WG Communication

This document outlines the strategy for portfolio communication developed by the Communication WG, in line with the objectives and activities reported in the Portfolio Strategic Plan. Furthermore, it provides an update on the activities foreseen in the strategy within the first year of the portfolio.

1.1 Portfolio Communication Strategy

The EIC ELMs Portfolio communication strategy aims at catalyzing and leveraging common communication opportunities to outside stakeholders. To ensure a unified and compelling representation of EIC ELMs Portfolio, the Communication WG has drafted the Communication Guidelines reported in this document (see also Section 1.2.3)

The Portfolio Communication Strategy doesn't include activities, key-messages and audiences that are of exclusive interest to a project; however, it includes strategies to reach stakeholder that are of interest for a cluster of projects i.e., related to a specific application field.

In the following paragraph we describe the main audiences targeted by the Portfolio communication identifying the main key-messages to be shared with each of them. Communication Channels and Activities are instead reported in Section 1.2.

1.1.1 Portfolio Target Audiences & Related Key Messages

Consumers and citizens: this audience is engaged to build trust in ELMs, familiarize with key concepts and collect expectations associated with the technology. As some activity might require discussing ethical concerns, the activities will be supported by the ELSA Working Group.

The main key message is to explain what Engineering Living Materials are, pointing out their peculiar features and highlighting the positive impact that they can have on several societal issues. The following definition can be used as guideline for the communication with citizens:

"Engineered Living Materials (ELMs) is a rapidly evolving interdisciplinary field that combines principles from biology, materials science, and engineering to create living systems with novel functionalities. Unlike traditional materials, which are typically inert and non-living, ELM involves the design and manipulation of living organisms to produce materials with unique properties and capabilities. These materials can be grown via co-cultivation or bioprinted".

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The main key features to highlight during the communication are:

1. **Living Nature**: ELM involves the use of living organisms, such as bacteria, yeast, fungi, or even mammalian cells, as building blocks to create materials. These living components interact with their environment and respond to stimuli, making them suitable for case-specific solutions.

2. **Sustainability:** ELM holds significant promise in advancing sustainability efforts. Living materials can be designed to biodegrade, reducing environmental impact. Moreover, the processes involved in producing these materials often require less energy and resources compared to traditional manufacturing methods.

3. **Multifunctionality:** ELM allows for the integration of multiple functionalities into a single material. For instance, researchers can engineer building materials, while also providing structural support, can sense and respond to environmental changes.

4. **Versatility of Applications**: The portfolio projects comprise a large variety of real-world use cases that demonstrate the tangible advantages of ELM in diverse industries such as Biotech/Pharma, Environmental testing, Filtrations systems, Construction/ Architecture, Textile/Clothing, Food and Cosmetics.

Overall, ELMs offer sustainable solutions for several societal issues as demonstrated by the list of potential applications of ELMs and the related positive impact for society foreseen portfolio. The full list is available in the table below – it's advice to highlight as many applications as possible.

TARGET APPLICATION /	POSITIVE IMPACT
Non-animal models for health applications e.g., drug development;	Reduce use of animal, increase accuracy of model in reproducing human physiology, speed up the drug development process, less failed iterations in the development-cycle
Smart tissues (hair, skin, bone, etc.) for **therapeutic applications**	Treatment of several conditions e.g., epidermal conditions;
Sensors and filters for toxicants in water or air e.g., wastewater analysis and purification, air filters	An eco-friendly alternative for purification, reducing reliance on chemicals and non-biodegradable sensor materials.
Building Materials to reduce air pollution e.g., building skins with carbon sequestration capabilities	Reducing use of resources (material and time) for the construction sector while contributing to CO_2 reduction.
Sustainable Manufacturing via **animal-free products** (fur, wool, meat)	Offer sustainable alternatives to animal-derived row materials;
Smart and responsive products e.g., fungi-based furniture, self-repair clothing	Improve product functionality and durability

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Researchers in the field of ELMs: the aim is to promote technology exchange on ELMs and to increase visibility of European ELM research. This audience is mainly reached by dissemination of project results or innovative methodology, highlighting the portfolio expertise and leadership in the field. As this audience is very technical, this activity is carried out mainly by the Technology WG.

Regulatory and standardization groups on ELMs and policy makers: this activity is covered by Regulatory Working Group**.** Key messages and specific communication actions will be updated in future updates.

1.1.2 Target Audiences for clusters of projects

Specific stakeholders can be engaged by clusters of projects that share applications in similar fields. In this case the objective is related to ensure technology uptake and transfer; collect feedback on applications and requirements; seek partners and join forces to tackle common struggles (e.g., regulatory pathway). The audiences identified so far are:

- **3Rs and Non-Animal Model Communities** (BioRobotMiniHeart, SUMO, PRISM-LT, NextSkins, Furoid);
- **Additive manufacturing and bioprinting companies** (PRISM-LT MiniHearth Robot);
- **Vegan consumers associations** interested in alternatives to animal-based products (Furoid, PRISM-LT);
- **Design practitioners** interested in alternatives to fossil-based materials and new functionalities providing added design value (FUNGATERIA, LoopOfFun).

1.2 Portfolio Communication Activities

This section lists all the planned Portfolio Communication Activities outlined in the Portfolio Strategic Plan and provides a quick overview of their status at M12.

1.2.1 Website

The Portfolio web presence is ensured by including a dedicated webpage on the project website of each project part of the portfolio. The webpages were created by May 2023 and based on the content prepared by the Communication WG and available on the Deliverable dedicated to the Project Website.

In the upcoming years the content might be revised to include communication material and/or promote specific activities organized by the portfolio.

1.2.2 Logo & Branding

The logo is a valuable representation of the portfolio's identity and should be used consistently across all communication channels in which each project or organization talks about the portfolio.

The logo for the EIC ELMs portfolio has been created by Phil Ayres (Fungateria) and Michela Candotti (PRISM-LT) in April 2023, following the fact that the competition proposed to design students produced no results. The logo features an oval shape that reminds of a microorganism and a dotted

gradient to highlight the variety of ELMs and their responsiveness. The logo is monochromatic in either black or white, to maximize the fit with the context in which it is placed.

The logo has been shared on the shared Teams in two formats: svg (vectorial) and png (with transparent background).

When using the EIC ELM Portfolio Branding, each partner should:

- Use the approved monochrome logo (black version and white version are both available). Avoid modifying colors or altering any elements of the logo.
- Ensure that the logo has sufficient clear space around it to maintain visibility and impact.
- Select high-quality images that showcase our research projects, preferably featuring ELMs representation or applications in the sectors covered by the portfolio. Some images can be found in the shared folder on teams.

1.2.3 Communication Guidelines

The Communication WG was appointed to create a set of communication guidelines for the portfolio that could be used by all the partners when they talk about the portfolio within their dissemination and communication actions.

A set of guidelines have been collected during July and August 2023 by the Communication WG Chair. The Communication WG members had the chance to revise and add content, ensuring that their project was correctly represented. The current version of the document is uploaded on the shared Team folder under the channel Communication WG.

The guidelines contain a list of Portfolio Target Audiences and Key Messages (also reported in Section 1.1.1 of this deliverable), including relevant audiences for clusters of projects. Furthermore, the document also contains a description of best practices related to EIC ELMs Portfolio Branding (see Section 1.2.2) and the use of the content.

The content included in the guidelines can be used as it is when discussing ELMs and the portfolio projects; for an updated text that describes the portfolio, and its objectives partners should refer to the latest version of the “EIC ELMs Portfolio Webpage”.

1.2.4 Social Media

Each project has its own social media channels that will also be used to support portfolio activities. In the Table below we show the presence of the portfolio’s projects on different social media, which cover with at least 3 projects the main social media (Twitter, LinkedIN, Instagram).

EIC ELMs Portfolio

Project	Twitter / X	LinkedIN	Instagram
BioRobot-MiniHeart	-	-	-
Fungateria	-	-	fungateria_eic
Furoid	-	geneusbiotech	-
LoopOfFun	@LoopOfFun1	-	loopoffun3
NextSkin	@NextSkinsELMs	elm-nextskins	nextskins_elms
Prism-LT	@prism_lt	TBU	-
SUMO	-	-	-

Projects are encouraged to interact on social media platforms and each other on ELMs-related content. When promoting activities developed within the EIC ELMs Portfolio the EIC accounts and related hashtags should be included too.

Linkedin: https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/european-innovation-council/

Twitter: https://twitter.com/EUeic
#EUeic

1.2.5 Documentary Video

In line with **OBJECTIVE 1 from the Strategic Plan on Communication:** inform the general public at European and possibly world-wide scale on the ELMs, the Communication working group decided to propose the ELMs as a subject for a documentary film.

Two people from the Communication Working Group were appointed to develop this activity because of their experience with documentary festivals: Phil Ayres (FUNGATERIA) and Jesse Veenvlie (SUMO).

Starting in late 2023, their task will be to network with media partners to identify potential filmmakers. Together with the filmmakers, a fundraising/grant application campaign may be initiated; all portfolio partners will then be available for interviews and filming at their locations.

1.2.6 Outreach Activities

In line with the **OBJECTIVE 2 from the Strategic Plan on Communication**: increase awareness of the local general public (i.e. where or close to where members of the portfolio are located) on the ELMs and the ELMs portfolio, the Communication WG has proposed to present the Portfolio in outreach activities such as the European Researchers' Night, in which project partners participate. These types of activities allow reaching a general local audience and are therefore carried out in close contact with individual partners active locally in the area of interest.

To this end, whenever a project intends to participate in outreach activities, it should notify the Communications WG well in advance so that the proper visibility of the portfolio can be arranged.

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As of now, relevant outreach activities for the Portfolio that have been reported to Communication WG are:

1. Prof. Dr. Wilfried Weber, PI of LoopOfFun, presented on the novel opportunities of ELMs on May 26th, 2023. The presentation was given in the frame of a **public event at Saarland University where** approx. 80 participants including students and their families were invited to attend.
2. Prof. Dr. Wilfried Weber, PI of LoopOfFun gave a talk on "Living Materials- A New Paradigm in the Materials Science" at the **public event in the science forum of the MINT Campus, St. Ingbert.** This event took place on 11th July 2023.
3. Outcomes of the Fungateria project will be exhibited at the **Planetary Boundaries exhibition, organized by the Royal Danish Academy**, opening 21.09.2023 and running until 16.02.2024. The exhibition is aimed at a wide audience both in and around Copenhagen.

1.2.7 Dissemination Events

Each project partner actively participates in a variety of dissemination events, where they present their project through talks or posters. When relevant, partners are encouraged to include information regarding the EIC ELMs portfolio at the European level. In this regard, Communication WG has shared some slides that can be used by partners; other materials can be created to meet the needs of specific activities.

The list of events in which each project has presented the portfolio is reported by the projects in Section 3. For more information on other Dissemination activities organized by the portfolio refer to Section 2 Contribution by the Technology WG.

1.2.8 Application to Horizon Results Booster

On the 17th of July 2023, the Portfolio, represented by the PRISM-LT project, applied to the Horizon Results Booster, to the "**Module B - Helping projects from the portfolio to design and execute a portfolio dissemination plan**". The deliverables of this service include the development of communication material e.g. a short video describing the project results. This service is available only for projects who already have a dissemination plan and with certain commonalities that allow for joint dissemination, thus it perfectly applies to the EIC ELMs Portfolio.

The application was sent by PRISM-LT including all the seven projects that are currently part of the Portfolio including as representative of the project the main contacts provided for the Communication WG. The application was formally accepted on the 18th of July (PRISM-LT 101070913 – PDESB) and followed by the assignment of experts supporting the provision of service:

- Veronica Meneghello - Junior - (veronica.meneghello@icons.it)
- Alessia Melasecche Germini - Project Manager - (a.melasecche@horizonresultsbooster.eu)
- Giulio Bordonaro - Junior - (giulio.bordonaro@icons.it)
- Elisabeth Schmid - Senior - (elisabeth.schmid@icons.it)

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In September the projects attended an introductory call to the Horizon Results Booster services with the aim to discuss together:

- needs and expectations;
- the use of the HRB Platform for the service delivery;
- starting date of the service and the next steps to prepare the service, which will be completely online, not in presence.

2 Contribution from the WG Technology

The Technology WG has undertaken the following activities in order to achieve two goals: being at the forefront of technology within the portfolio, and disseminating and sharing technology and research on ELMs with the broader scientific community:

Objective 1: Exchange Platform

After evaluating the format for exchange within LoopOfFun's consortium and testing its usability, a portfolio-communication platform, "Technical Focus Groups", has been set up using popular Microsoft Teams software which belongs to INM's institution (Fig. 1). It consists of dedicated Channels for the following groups (Fig. 2):

- Filamentous fungal-based ELMs: Fungateria, LoopOfFun
- Mammalian ELMs: Biorobot-MiniHeart, Furoid, SUMO
- Yeast and bacteria co-culture: NextSkins, PRISM-LT

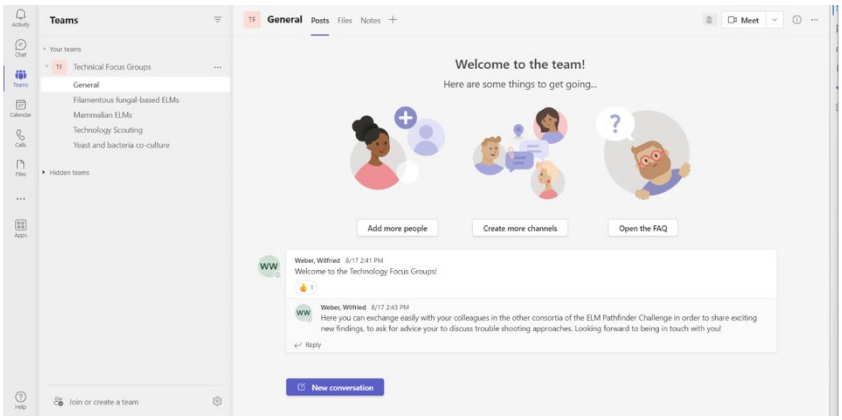

Fig. 1 Screenshot of the Overview of the "Technical Focus Groups"

Thanks to various features, i.e., conversations within channels and teams, chat function, online video calling and screening sharing, online meeting…, this team will enable technology WG to efficiently exchange on technical challenges common to at least two consortia. Furthermore, the information within technology WG can now be held in a structural way.

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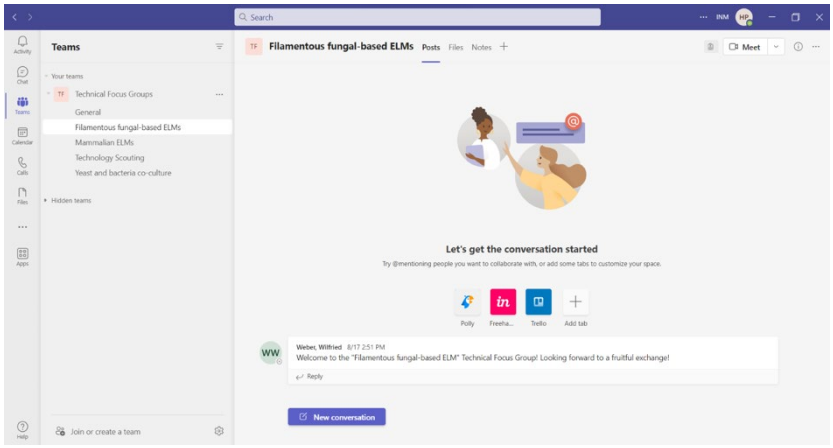

Fig. 2 Screenshot of the Overview of the "Filamentous fungal-based ELMs" channel

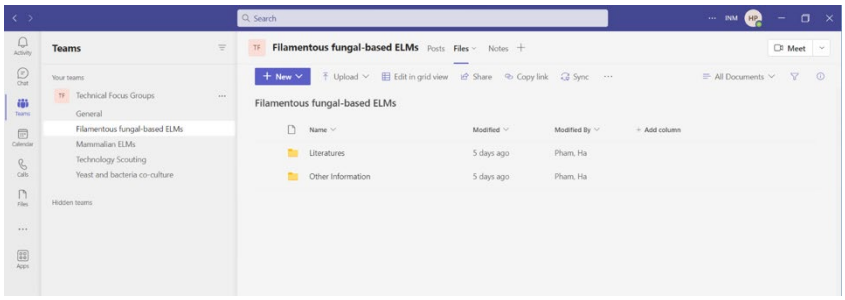

Fig. 3 Screenshot of the first files in "Filamentous fungal-based ELMs" channel

Objective 2: Tech Scouting

To ensure to be up to date with technological developments in ELMs at a global scale and to remain at the forefront of scientific literatures and developments, a channel "Technology Scouting" has been set up within the team "Technical Focus Groups" (Fig. 4). It will be implemented by distribution list via which outstanding new ELM publications / patents will be shared among the portfolio (Fig. 5), and an additional joint access to a reference manager, where publications on ELMs can be uploaded, shared, and searched for. Optimally, there should be one responsible person (i.e., a postdoc) per consortium to feed new publications / patents into the reference manager. After evaluating different reference managers with a special focus on the possibility to share among multiple members, we decided to use Mendeley.

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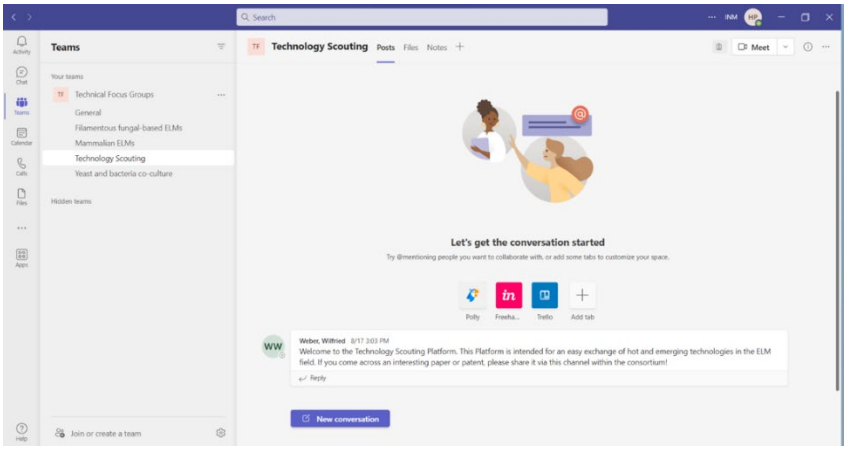

Fig. 4 Screenshot of the overview of “Technology Scouting” channel

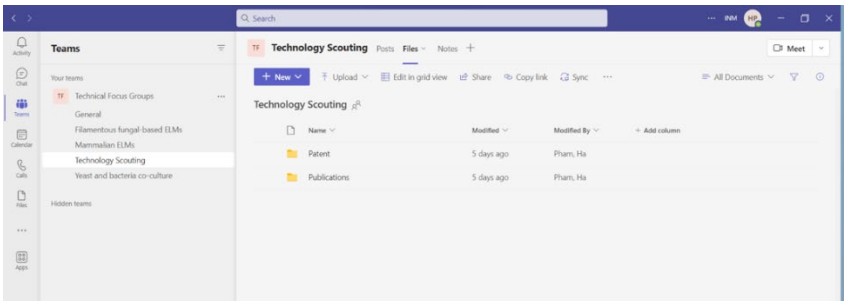

Fig. 5 Screenshot of the files in “Technology Scouting” channel

Objective 3: Marie Curie Programme

Scheduled for 2024. Further progress needed in projects for application.

Objective 4: Organization / Co-Organization of a conference

The fourth international conference on ELMs is planned for early 2024 in Saarbrücken, Germany, but the date has not yet been decided. Link to the third conference for information: https://www.livingmaterials2022.de

From a national perspective (Germany), The coordinator of LoopOfFun was co-applicant and is now member of the program committee of the "Priority Program on Engineered Living Materials" by the German Research Foundation. In the frame of the program, an workshop on ELMs with national and international speakers has been organized on July 10th and 11th, 2023, see https://spp2451.de/events/https://spp2451.de/events/

Objective 5: Special Issue in Journal

Scheduled for 2024/2025 when first data will be available from the research within the portfolio.

Objective 6: Outreach to next generation of Scientists

Scheduled for 2024 or later, depending on the progress in the different research projects in the portfolio.

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3 Specific contribution from the members of the project

In this section the specific contributions of the FUNGATERIA consortium to the Communication WG activities are presented.

3.1.1 Website

In May 2023, the FUNGATERIA website was updated with the addition of a dedicated webpage for the ELM Portfolio, implementing the content and following the guidelines provided by the Communication WG.

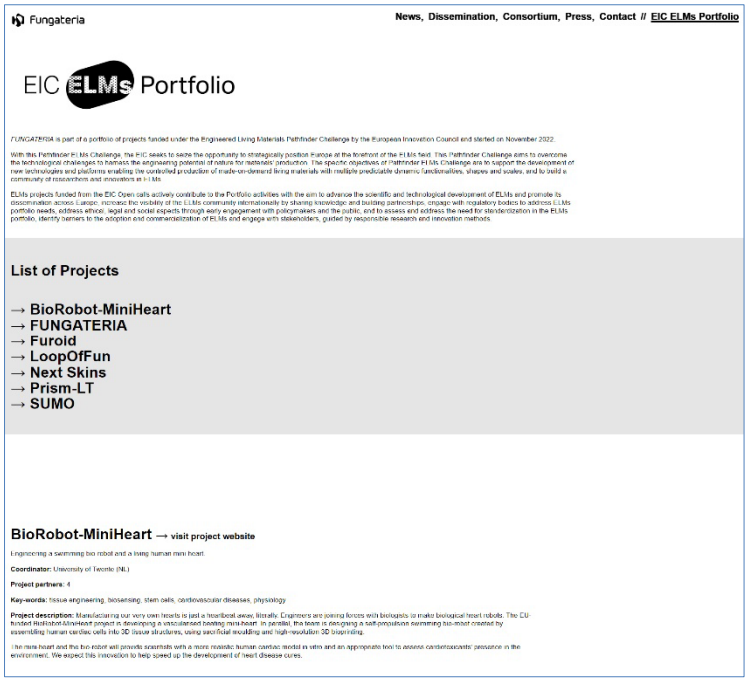

Fig. 6 Screenshot of the EIC ELM Portfolio page on the FUNGATERIA website.

3.1.2 Logo & Branding

The FUNGATERIA project contributed to the development of the ELM Portfolio logo, together with Michela Candotti (PRISM-LT) in April 2023.

3.1.3 Communication guidelines

The FUNGATERIA project contributed to the formulating of the communication guidelines during July and August 2023. This included a list of Portfolio target audiences, key messages, defining relevant audiences for clusters of projects and a description of best practices related to EIC ELMs Portfolio branding and the use of the content.

3.1.4 Social media

FUNGATERIA is preparing posts on its social media channels (Instagram and LinkedIn) to draw attention to the ELM Portfolio. These will be posted before the end of 2023.

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3.1.5 Documentary video

We are actively searching for possible funding avenues and have identified a potential with the Carlsberg Foundation Science Communication instrument - https://www.carlsbergfondet.dk/en/Applicant/Apply/Call-and-Guidelines/Science-Communication. From the website funding criteria it is stated:

Who can apply

Science Communication is open to applications from independent communicators, public institutions, private companies, and non-profit organisations. Applicants must have documented professional experience with communication, e.g. journalism or media production. The applicant must be the project leader and/or the head of the institution administering the project.

Private companies and producers may apply for funding for non-commercial projects with a non-profit aim. At least some of the project's principal communication must therefore be accessible to the public free of charge.

What can be applied for

Communication projects for a period of maximum three years with an application amount of DKK 100,000-3,000,000.
The project can be independently defined or form part of a larger project, and the project may be co-financed with funds from another party.
Funding can be sought for projects that communicate science and research to non-scientific target groups in an engaging way.

A potential limitation of this instrument is its primary focus on national (Danish) dissemination focus. The FUNGATERIA coordinator will make enquiries to the funding body to ascertain if the scope of the communication project can be extended to European focused communication rather than specifically Denmark. As a fallback, additional funding sources for a European focused communication project will be sought. In addition to seeking funding avenues, we are embarking on a preliminary scanning for potential filmmakers with whom to collaborate on this activity. This will be developed with the ELM Portfolio consortium over the coming months.

3.1.6 Outreach activities

In line with the Communication WG ambition for increasing awareness of the general public on ELMs and the ELMs portfolio, the FUNGATERIA project has included assets provided and approved by the Communications WG within a poster that accompanies project outcomes currently being exhibited at the **Planetary Boundaries exhibition, organized by the Royal Danish Academy**. The exhibition opened 21.09.2023 and runs until 16.02.2024. The exhibition is aimed at a public and design research audience both in and around Copenhagen.

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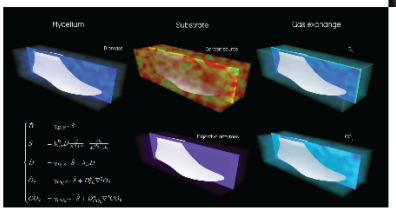
Fungateria

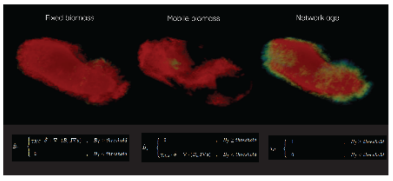
Bringing mycelium-based materials into an 'Engineered Living Materials' context

Phil Ayres, Adrien Rigobello, Claudia Colmo, Vilhelm Carlström, You-Wen Ji

Engineered Living Materials (ELM) is a rapidly evolving interdisciplinary field that combines principles from biology, materials science, and engineering to create living systems with novel functionalities.

Unlike traditional materials, which are typically inert and non-living, ELM involves the design and manipulation of living organisms to produce materials with unique properties and capabilities including self-regeneration, adaptation to environmental cues and self-organisation across hierachies of scale and structure.





This project sets out the ambitious target of holistically considering ELM design, modelling, production and lifecycle. It seeks to establish the insights and technologies to demonstrate:

1. **Geometric approximation** between design intent & production of complex 3D structures
2. **Reproducibility in morphological** outcomes at production stage
3. **Predictability of function** at application stage
4. **Scalar versatility** in the production of the ELM, from mm to meter length scale
5. **Compositional versatility** in cellular arrangement and differentiation
6. **Novel and controllable interactions** between the ELM and environmental cues

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EIC ELMs Portfolio

European Innovation Council — Funded by the European Union

FUNGATERIA is part of a portfolio of projects funded under the Engineered Living Materials Pathfinder Challenge by the European Innovation Council.

With this Pathfinder ELMs Challenge, the EIC seeks to strategically position Europe at the forefront of the ELMs field and seeks to overcome technological challenges to harness the engineering potential of nature for the production of materials.

The specific objectives of Pathfinder ELMs Challenge are to support the development of new technologies and platforms enabling the controlled production of made-on-demand living materials with multiple predictable dynamic functionalities, shapes and scales; and to build a community of researchers and innovators in ELMs. For further information visit:

www.fungateria.eu/eic-elms-portfolio/

Applications

Properties

Projects

PRISM-LT · SUMO · NEXTSKINS · LoopOfFun · Furoid*Project · Fungateria

Royal Danish Academy · University of Oslo · Ghent University · European Innovation Council

CITA Chair for Biohybrid Architecture · UWE Bristol · Universiteit Utrecht · VUB Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Fig. 7 Poster accompanying the FUNGATERIA exhibit at the Planetary Boundaries exhibition.

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3.1.7 Dissemination Events

Following the Communication WG encouragement for partners to include information regarding the EIC ELMs portfolio in talks or posters, the following slides – prepared by the Communication WG – have been included in the following dissemination events:

Keynote Address by Phil Ayres (KADK) – ACADIA conference, Denver, USA 26-28.10.2023
https://2023.acadia.org/

Forthcoming keynote Address by Phil Ayres (KADK) – Conference, Bucharest, Romania 16-16.11.2023

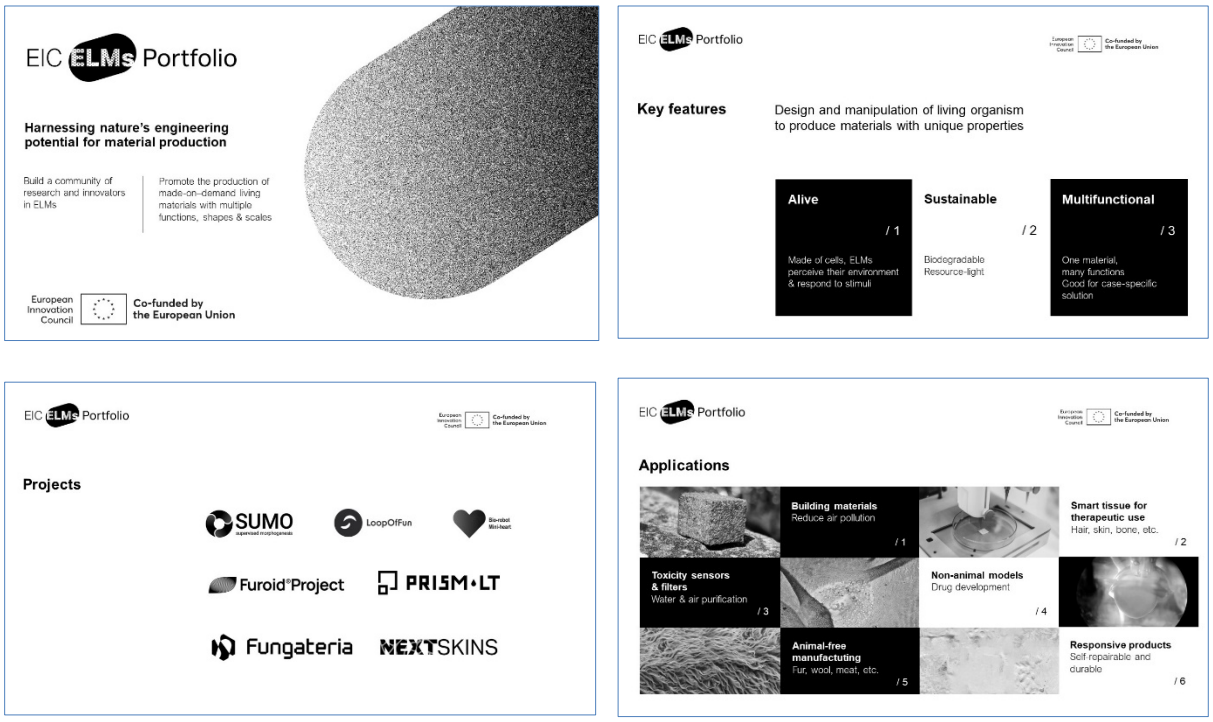

Fig. 8 Slides provided by the Communication WG used in dissemination activities.

3.1.8 Application to Horizon Results Booster

In September, FUNGATERIA joined the other ELM Portfolio projects for the introductory call to the Horizon Results Booster services. We have subsequently completed the project specific online survey and await participation in the next activities.

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4 Conclusions

The FUNGATERIA project has contributed to the development and definition of activities defined by the Communication WG in the Strategic Plan. The project has also contributed, and continues to contribute, to currently active activities – specifically related to website, logo and branding, social media, documentary video, outreach and public dissemination events.

Technology WG activities covered by objectives 3 to 6 are scheduled for 2024 or beyond. The objective Exchange Platform has been implemented, but its use by FUNGATERIA has not yet begun. The project has also not yet begun participating in objective 2 - Tech Scouting – facilitated by the Exchange Platform. Use and contribution of these, is planned for reporting period 2.