

Australian Microbiome Scientific Coordination Working Group Terms of Reference v1.0

1. Introduction

The Australian Microbiome initiative is a continental-scale, collaborative project aspiring to characterise the diversity and ecosystem services of the microorganisms inhabiting natural Australian ecosystems.

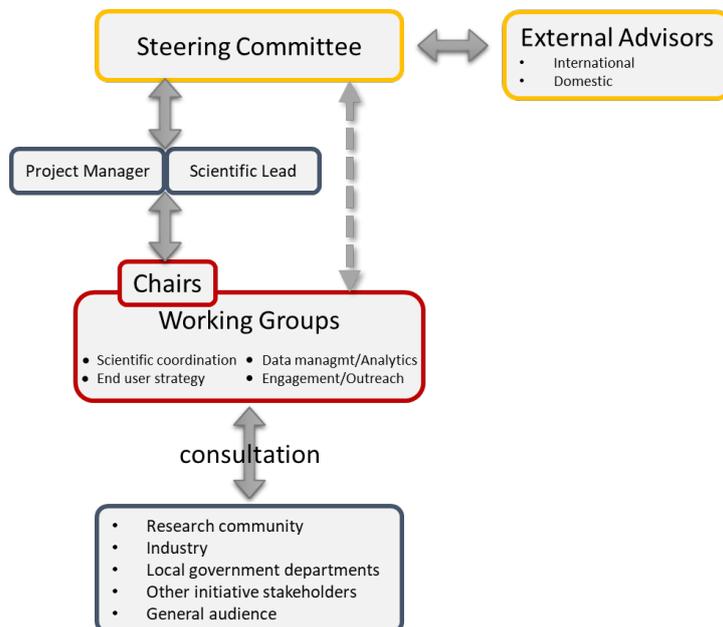
The current core partners funding the establishment of the Australian Microbiome initiative are Bioplatforms, IMOS, CSIRO, and Parks Australia through the Bush Blitz program funded by the Australian Government and BHP. The consortium will seek further investment from other organisations to ensure the totality of the program is funded.

The initiative aims to develop an Australian microbial diversity and genomics resource for management, monitoring, and R&D purposes. The consortium efforts will:

- Sustain and strengthen the Australian environmental microbial diversity and genomic resource
- Engage a broad range of end users
- Enhance functionality to allow translation of the resource to applied outcomes for a broad range of end-users and uses

2. Structure

To ensure proper management of the initiative a structure of executive streams have been established as shown in the diagram below. In addition, the initiative will receive input of external advisors.



Each of the working groups will engage in broad consultation of the consortium and provide informed recommendations to the Steering Committee. The working groups will be assigned a set of deliverables alongside an indicated timeframe of completion.

The groups are designed to bring together individuals possessing knowledge of the relevant functional areas as well as expertise in disciplines and will act either individually or collectively to undertake assigned tasks and activities in order to achieve the project's objectives.

As the initiative progresses, it may be appropriate to reframe working group composition and responsibilities.

3. Terms

This Terms of Reference is effective from the start of the framework initiative (1st July 2018) and stands until the completion of the tasks assigned to the Scientific Coordination working group and no later than the expected completion date of the initiative estimated at 30th June 2021 (3 years).

4. Membership

The Scientific Coordination Working Group is composed of:

Name	Role	Affiliation
Mark Brown (Chair)	Chair	University of Newcastle
Belinda Ferrari	Member	University of New South Wales
Jeff Powell	Member	University of Western Sydney
Martin Breed	Member	University of Adelaide
Martin Ostrowski	Member	Macquarie University
Nicole Webster	Member	AIMS/ACE
Pauline Mele	Member	VicDEPI/La Trobe University
Torsten Thomas	Member	University of New South Wales
Sophie Mazard	Observer, Project Manager	Bioplatforms Australia

5. Roles and Responsibilities of the Working group

The Scientific Coordination working group provides scientific guidance to the Australian Microbiome Initiative consortium. Members of the working group are expected to act in an impartial manner, representing the interest of the consortium above personal/organisational interests.

The Scientific Coordination working group is established to deliver a set of defined tasks. Following completion of these deliverables, the working group may be terminated or its membership modified towards a new set of tasks.

The Scientific Coordination working group is accountable for:

- Fostering collaboration and willing to liaise and consult with relevant stakeholders both within and outside of the consortium
- Establishing operating procedures and workflows for the initiative
- Consult with research community to establish criteria for the scientific assessment of material to be processed by the initiative
- Consult with research community to deliver a coordinated manual

The membership of the Scientific Coordination Working Group will be tasked to

- Develop a set of criteria for the assessment of material (e.g. samples and data) to be included by the initiative
- Establish the scientific (field/workflow) manual for the Australian Microbiome initiative including, but not limited to: coordinated methods: sampling/DNA-RNA extraction and processing, sequencing methods and processes. This will review the already established methods for the BASE and Marine Microbes initiatives.
- Establish a sub-group to assess proposals for sub-projects to be awarded support from the un-defined pool of resourcing and make recommendations for support of sub-projects to the steering committee

6. Meetings and Agenda

Meeting agendas and supporting papers will be provided by the Chair with support from the initiative's Project Manager.

Meetings will be held either in person or through teleconference for convenience. If required subgroup meetings will be arranged at a time convenient to subgroup members for the requirement of defined tasks.

Recommendations will be made by consensus (i.e. members are satisfied with the decision even though it may not be their first choice).

Individuals or groups of members within the Working Group may be allocated specific tasks. These tasks will be discussed and agreed with those who are assigned responsibility and will be formalised in a written task definition. Activities associated with specific tasks and the estimated timescale for their completion will be incorporated into the initiative workflow.

7. Reporting

The position of the Scientific Coordination working group within the overall Initiative governance structure is shown in the diagram in Section 1. Minutes will be made available on the OSF initiative page (<https://osf.io/w8xpe/>).

- The working group will report to the Steering Committee regarding the progress of their activities. A final recommendation brief will be provided as per schedule of activities.
- The working group members will keep records of consultation and minutes of meetings

8. Amendment, modification or variation

This Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation and agreement by the Scientific Coordination working group members and the Steering Committee.