

## Widening Country Inspiration Story

“Carefully plan in advance the secondments.”

**Organisation name:** Center of Plant Systems Biology and Biotechnology (CPSBB)  
**Organisation type:** Private non-profit research organisation  
**Country:** Bulgaria  
**Project Acronym:** CropPrime  
**Project start and end date:** 01.01.2023-31.12.2026  
**Type of MSCA, Horizon Europe:** Staff Exchanges  
**Is your organisation a coordinator?** No



### What is your project about and why is the topic important for science advancement?

The main objective of the project is to advance our knowledge on crop priming in order to foster the development of innovative and environmentally friendly tools to protect plants from abiotic and biotic stresses. Our research will provide novel insights into the modes of action of seaweed-based biostimulants; it will also allow us to study the possible synergistic effects between various bioactive molecules and identify key stress memory genes and epigenetic mechanisms controlling tolerance to diverse stress stimuli.

### Why is your project important for society?

CropPrime will have a positive impact on food security by enhancing the productivity of agricultural systems in stressful conditions in this era of climate change. This is of critical importance, since global population constantly rises and this is coupled to increased challenges to agriculture caused by the consequences of climate changes and anthropogenic factors. Moreover, the effective use of improved biostimulants will lower irrigation requirements, thus

also reducing the ecological footprint for food production.

### What communication and public engagement measures have you foreseen?

The project will use various communication channels: a website, a leaflet, open lectures and social media. The public will be directly engaged by participation in events like the European Researchers' Night.

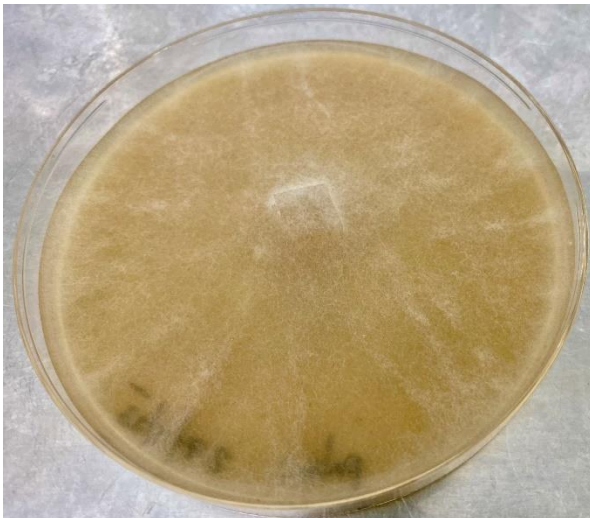
### What kind of support did you get?

Our previous experience as coordinators of the RESIST project funded by the Horizon 2020 MSCA-RISE programme proved a great source of help during the preparation of the project proposal, since we were already familiar with most of the specifics, requirements, etc. Naturally, the Work Programme and the new Guide for Applicants were also consulted.

**Do you have other successful projects under Horizon 2020?** Yes - RESIST.

**What in your experience helped you to succeed?** We attribute the success of our project proposals to various factors like defining clear and achievable research objectives, addressing topics of both fundamental and practical importance, forming versatile consortia with mutually complementary competencies and roles of the individual partners, demonstrating sufficient capacity to carry out the planned activities, and having ambitious dissemination and communication plans.

**How did you find the partners in your consortium?** Some of the partners had already collaborated before. The rest of the partners were identified based on similarity in their research interests and their potential contribution to the scope of the project.



Phytophthora spp. will be used as a source of bioactive compounds that induce a priming effect in plants

**What tips can you give other organisations that would like to apply for MSCA?**

We think that one of the most important things to consider when applying for a Staff Exchanges project in particular is to carefully plan in advance the secondments and to try to predict possible logistics or human resources-related challenges that might occur in the project implementation phase. For all MSCA projects in general contacting the National Contact Points for advise and attending information days can prove very useful.

More information on the project:



The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) support researchers at all stage of their career across all disciplines. The MSCA also support cooperation between industry and academia and provide innovative trainings and career developments.

The MSCA Staff Exchanges (SE) funds short-term international and inter-sectoral exchanges of staff members involved in research and innovation activities with the aim to develop sustainable collaborative projects between different organisations from the academic and non-academic sectors (in particular SMEs), based in Europe and beyond.

The MSCA-NET project is the MSCA NCP project to facilitate the transnational cooperation to achieve a consistent and harmonised level of NCP support. The scientific community can also profit from our project to support their MSCA application.

