

## Phytobiomes Alliance to lead NSF-funded Culture Collection Network



*EAU CLAIRE, Wis., US – April 5, 2022*

The [International Alliance for Phytobiomes Research](#) was awarded a five-year grant from the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) to administer phase two of the [United States Culture Collection Network](#) (USCCN). Dubbed USCCN 2.0, the new incarnation of the research coordination network will expand the scope and reach of the original network by making new connections and building global relationships.

Biological collections play an essential role in life science research and have led to many science discoveries and innovations. They are used in fundamental research for studies at the molecular, cellular, organismal and community level and in applied research to improve health, food security, and energy production.

In its first phase (2012-2020), USCCN engaged the U.S. culture collection community through meetings, webinars, and site visits and produced publications and position papers to support the safe and responsible utilization of microbial resources.

Building on the accomplishments of the network's first phase, USCCN 2.0 will expand and build relationships with current and new sources of culture and living collections and will engage scientists across multiple disciplines to work toward addressing challenges and needs shared by all microbial collection managers and users.

One of the first actions of USCCN 2.0 will be the launch of a central registry and collection database to identify and classify the collection resources available worldwide. Data collected through the registry will increase the breadth and utility of living plant microbial collections for multi-disciplinary scientific projects.

“Developing a robust database of living, microbial resources in the United States has been a long-standing need of the broad research community,” said Dusti Gallagher, USCCN 2.0

Manager. “The registry will identify and collect vital information about all types of microbial culture collections. The information will be publicly available in an online, searchable database and will support the collections community and industry stakeholders who develop or utilize microbes, microbial collections, and other microbial resources for research or industrial purposes.”

USCCN 2.0 will also focus on increasing partnerships between industry, academia, and other entities and on synergizing activities with other projects, networks, organizations, and societies globally. USCCN 2.0 will promote a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce, and will encourage participation of underrepresented communities.

USCCN 2.0 will be managed by the International Alliance for Phytobiomes Research – a nonprofit consortium of industry, academia, and governmental entities from around the globe – that facilitates and coordinates international efforts toward expanding phytobiomes research to accelerate the sustainable production of food, feed, and fiber for food security. Phytobiomes research is a system-level approach focused on the complex interactions between plants, microorganisms, soils, climate, environment, and management practices.

“Ensuring the maintenance of and future access to microbial culture collections is critically important to the vision of the Phytobiomes Alliance,” said Kellye Eversole, Phytobiomes Alliance Executive Director. “As agricultural production relies more and more on biological products for plant health and sustainability, we need to have resources from which to find new products. The USCCN will play a key role in this, and, through the international scope of the Alliance, we hope it will link with similar efforts globally.”

Officially called “U.S. Culture Collection Network 2.0: The Next Generation Research Coordination Network for Ex Situ Microbial Germplasm Collections” the NSF-funded project will operate from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2027.

### **About the International Alliance for Phytobiomes Research**

The International Alliance for Phytobiomes Research is an international, nonprofit consortium of industry, academic, and governmental partners created in 2016. The goal of the Alliance is to

understand, predict and control emergent phenotypes for sustainable production of food, feed and fiber. For more information visit [phytobiomesalliance.org](http://phytobiomesalliance.org) and follow the Alliance on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

### **About the United States Culture Collection Network**

The United States Culture Collection Network (USCCN) is a Research Coordination Network supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation through grants #1534564 and #2124633. The mission of the USCCN is to facilitate the safe and responsible utilization of microbial resources for research, education, industry, medicine, and agriculture for the betterment of humankind. For more information visit [usccn.org](http://usccn.org) and follow the network on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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