

Notes from the Scientific Council meeting

Date: 14.3. 2025

The meeting was partially on-line (Zoom) and on-site (Pau II)

Present on-line: Vladimír Hampl, Pavel Doležal

Present on-site: Marcela Nouzová, Marie Vancová, Martin Kolísko, Jan Perner, Ivan Fiala, Roman Sobotka, Alena Zíková (in random order)

The Scientific Council met to discuss the proposal of IoP Director Prof. Miroslav Oborník to establish a laboratory for Dr. Elisabeth Hehenberger.

Elisabeth has been part of the IoP for several years and is currently a member of Dr. Martin Kolísko's group. After joining IoP, she successfully secured the prestigious Illumina Quaeruntur grant from the Academy of Sciences (2022–2026), which is awarded to young talents with the potential to establish their own research group. In fact, the grant provider requires the establishment of an independent research group as part of the grant conditions. Another significant achievement of Elisabeth, highlighting her scientific excellence, uniqueness, leadership skills, and ability to manage a research team, is the award of an ERC Consolidator Grant.

Based on these outstanding achievements, the Scientific Council fully supports the establishment of an independent research group led by Elisabeth.

Elisabeth proposes the name Laboratory of Evolution of Protist Symbiosis for her group.

Her plan is to create a mid-sized, international, and diverse research team focusing on protist symbioses using bioinformatics, experimental, and microscopic approaches.

Her current research plans include:

- Studying the evolution of (plastid) symbiosis in free-living and host-associated dinoflagellates
- Exploring the unknown diversity of lineages with kleptoplasts, replaced plastids, or reduced plastids
- Describing symbioses at the transcriptomic, proteomic, metabolomic, and ultrastructural levels
- Developing new kleptoplastidic model systems
- Expanding the phylogenetic tree of dinoflagellates
- Establishing a pipeline for transcriptome-wide horizontal gene transfer (HGT) analysis

As part of establishing her research group, Elisabeth will focus on recruiting new members, maintaining and developing international collaborations, and stabilizing the existing team. She has also offered her expertise in single-cell isolation, large transcriptome assembly, gene transfer analysis, phylogenomics, and related fields for internal collaborations within IoP.

Regarding laboratory space, Elisabeth is currently based in the new IoP building (PaU III) and does not have any additional space requirements, either for laboratory or office use. Thanks to her excellent funding, her needs for laboratory equipment, computing resources, and office supplies are minimal. **The Scientific Council appreciates this but also emphasizes that the institute**

should provide maximum support to Elisabeth's group to ensure a strong research environment.

During the discussion, Elisabeth answered questions from Scientific Council members regarding competition in the field, collaboration with Dr. Kolísko, shared spaces within PaU III, equipment acquisition, recruitment of new team members, student supervision, and language barriers.

The Scientific Council unanimously agrees that Elisabeth is a mature scientific leader with her own research vision, excellent funding, and no obstacles preventing her from leading her own laboratory

The notes were read and approved by all members of SC.