

DELIVERABLE 1.4: FINAL GENERAL MEETING

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SYNTHESYS⁺ was funded by the Horizon 2020 Framework of the European Union under the H2020 Open Innovation and Open Science Research Infrastructure call.

Summary

The final Annual General Meeting (AGM) for SYNTHESYS+ took place at the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR) Brussels, between 7-9th February 2023 and formed part of the [DiSSCo Futures](#) meeting. This meeting was an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the DiSSCo-linked projects including SYNTHESYS+, [MOBILISE](#) (Cost Action CA17106) and [DiSSCo Prepare](#) (H2020 871043) and to look to the future to ensure sustainability of the ongoing activities and outcomes.

DiSSCo Futures brought to Brussels 194 participants from over 25 countries for a series of 68 talks on various aspects of SYNTHESYS, MOBILISE and DiSSCo, from technical topics such as digitisation, virtual access or data standards to organisational matters such as capacity building and governance.

As a result of combining the final meetings for these three projects, a much larger meeting and audience was achieved compared with the originally planned SYNTHESYS+ final AGM which was budget-limited to only work package leaders and single representatives from other beneficiaries. Consequently a larger attendance of 116 people represented 25 of the SYNTHESYS+ beneficiaries at the meeting.



Figure 1: The SYNTHESYS+ final meeting at DiSSCo Futures, February 2023. Photo credit: dissco.eu.



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SYNTHESYS+
Synthesis of Systematic Resources
a DiSSCo project

Programme

The DiSSCo Futures programme can be accessed here: <https://futures.dissco.eu/programme> where a [detailed session-by-session programme](#) can also be found.

SYNTHESYS+ partners led or were involved in six of the seven main sessions which were focused on: SYNTHESYS past and present, Digitisation, Virtual Access, Physical Access, Digital Infrastructure and Standards.

Themes for presentations and discussions were as follows:

- Day 1: **Opening Plenary** with keynote and plenary talks including keynotes on “Five Provocations for the future of natural science collections” (Doug Gurr) and “A Glimpse into the Future of Museums: People, Buildings, Data” (Deb Paul) and a plenary on “SYNTHESYS: past and present” (Vanessa Pike).
- Day 1: **Digitisation: Transforming Collections** session, with views on the impact of SYNTHESYS and other DiSSCo projects for collection transformation and European digitisation efforts, a series of lightning talks including on the Specimen Data Refinery and sharing digitisation best practice.
- Day 2: **Virtual Access** session including a presentation of the SYNTHESYS+ model of VA, lightning talks from all 10 funded VA projects, and a panel discussion on the future challenges and opportunities of VA in DiSSCo.
- Day 2: **Trans-national Access** session including a summary of two decades of TA in SYNTHESYS, perspectives on TA from users, hosts, lab managers, other TA infrastructures and from the EC, with a panel discussion on the future of TA.
- Day 2: **Digital infrastructure** session with a keynote on the context and future of digital infrastructure, a demonstration of the Specimen Data Refinery, and a discussion on machine learning, AI and other digital technologies in the DiSSCo infrastructure.
- Day 2: **Standards** session including a series of lightning talks on topics such as stable identifiers, Minimum Information about a Digital Specimen (MIDS), the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) and Latimer Core.
- Day 3: **Organisational and Human Capacity** session including discussion about the continuous community effort towards the construction of DiSSCo.
- Day 3: **Closing Remarks and Future Plenary** session including closing remarks from presenters, an interactive debate on the topic “DiSSCo should have digitisation as its main priority”, physical networking event, and a handover of the DiSSCo Construction Master Plan.



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Figure 2: Photos from the SYNTHESYS+ Final Annual General Meeting: DiSSCo Futures, including opening plenary and summary of SYNTHESYS 1, 2, 3 and + (top row), Specimen Data Refinery demonstration and Transnational Access panel discussion (middle row) and Virtual Access presentations (bottom row).

Presentations and recordings

The 3-day meeting's full slideset can be accessed here: [DiSSCo Futures slideset](#) and video recordings of the sessions can be found here: <https://www.dissco.eu/dissco-futures-recordings/>.



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