

# STEPUPIORS

Twinning for a European Consortium of Rectal Cancer Research Institutions through Stepping up Scientific, Technological and Innovation Excellence of IORS



Funded by  
the European Union

Project number: 101079217



INSTITUT ZA ONKOLOGIJU  
I RADIOLOGIJU SRBIJE



FUNDACIÓ  
CLÍNIC  
BARCELONA



UNIVERSITAT DE  
BARCELONA



*BgF summer school (WP3)*

Second part 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023, Belgrade

**STEPUPIORS**  
**EVOLUTION AND INSIGHTS**

**Milena Čavić**  
**10.10.2023.**

# STEPUPIORS evolution



## *Ethics Committee Approval*



Application for approval to conduct the research entitled: *“Investigation of prognostic and predictive clinical and molecular markers of response to neoadjuvant radiochemotherapy using volume rotational radiation therapy planning and simultaneous integrated boost in locally advanced rectal cancer”*.

## **PhD Thesis Mladen Marinković**



## **PhD Thesis Aleksandra Stanojević**



# STEPUPIORS evolution

## CA17118 TRANSCOLONCAN

Review > Front Cell Dev Biol. 2021 Nov 10;9:750022. doi: 10.3389/fcell.2021.750022.

eCollection 2021.

### Cross-Talk Between Tumor Cells Undergoing Epithelial to Mesenchymal Transition and Natural Killer Cells in Tumor Microenvironment in Colorectal Cancer

Ana Vuletić<sup>1</sup>, Katarina Mirjačić Martinović<sup>1</sup>, Nevena Tišma Miletić<sup>1</sup>, Jerome Zoidakis<sup>2</sup>, Sergi Castellvi-Bel<sup>3</sup>, Milena Čavić<sup>1</sup>

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 34858978 PMID: PMC8631470 DOI: 10.3389/fcell.2021.750022

> Medicina (Kaunas). 2021 Oct 15;57(10):1108. doi: 10.3390/medicina57101108.

### Prognostic Factors for Post-Recurrence Survival in Stage II and III Colorectal Carcinoma Patients

Neda Nikolic<sup>1</sup>, Davorin Radosavljevic<sup>1</sup>, Dusica Gavrilovic<sup>1</sup>, Vladimir Nikolic<sup>1</sup>, Nemanja Stanic<sup>1</sup>, Jelena Spasic<sup>1</sup>, Tamara Cacev<sup>2</sup>, Sergi Castellvi-Bel<sup>3</sup>, Milena Cavic<sup>1</sup>, Goran Jankovic<sup>4</sup>

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 34684145 PMID: PMC8538010 DOI: 10.3390/medicina57101108

> Radiol Oncol. 2021 Oct 8;55(4):449-458. doi: 10.2478/raon-2021-0039.

### The role of haematological parameters in predicting the response to radical chemoradiotherapy in patients with anal squamous cell cancer

Suzana Stojanovic-Rundic<sup>1 2</sup>, Mladen Marinkovic<sup>1</sup>, Milena Cavic<sup>3</sup>, Vesna Plesinac Karapandzic<sup>1 2</sup>, Dusica Gavrilovic<sup>4</sup>, Radmila Jankovic<sup>3</sup>, Richarda M de Voer<sup>5</sup>, Sergi Castellvi-Bel<sup>6</sup>, Zoran Krivokapic<sup>2 7</sup>

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 34626531 PMID: PMC8647797 DOI: 10.2478/raon-2021-0039



Funded by the European Union



Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia



This training school is based upon work from COST Action CA17118 (TRANSCOLONCAN), supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a funding agency for research and innovation networks. Our Actions help connect research initiatives across Europe and enable scientists to grow their ideas by sharing them with their peers. This boosts their research, career and innovation. [www.cost.eu](http://www.cost.eu)

This training school is supported by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia, PROMIS #6060876, TRACEPIGEN

# STEPUPIORS evolution

2018 Dear Dr Castellví-Bel...  
**CA17118 TRANSCOLONCAN**

2021 Dear Dr Zoidakis...



BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH  
FOUNDATION ACADEMY OF  
ATHENS  
4 Soranou Efessiou St., 115 27 Athens,  
Greece

#### Host Support Letter

To the STSM Committee  
of the COST Action CA17118 TRANSCOLONCAN

Athens, 18.05.2021.

This is to confirm that Aleksandra Stefanovic, a Ph.D. student from the Institute for Oncology and Radiology of Serbia will perform a two-week short-term scientific mission in the period of 25.09.2021. to 09.10.2021. at the Department of Biotechnology, Biomedical Research Foundation, Academy of Athens, Greece, under my direct supervision. During this STSM,



From:  
Dr. Milena Cavic  
IORS

To:  
Dr. Clara Ruiz Ponte  
Fundación Pública Galega de Medicina  
Xenómica

**Subject:** Letter of support for the STSM application of Dr Vasiliki Lygiriou

Dear Dr Ruiz Ponte,  
I would like to confirm that IORS will host Dr Vasiliki Lygiriou for a STSM relative to the aim 3 of the COST Action TRANSCOLONCAN, "Tumor profiling to identify biomarkers with prognostics and predictive value for patient stratification"

2021 Dear Dr Fijneman...

2022 **STEPUPIORS**

SEP  
20-21  
2021

Meetings

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE + WORKING  
GROUP 3 MEETING

September, 2021

Bucharest (Romania)



# Objectives and aims

The main aim of the STEPUPIORS project is to establish a European consortium of research institutions dedicated to defining prognostic biomarkers in rectal cancer.

## Objective 1

Determine the molecular profile of response to neoadjuvant chemoradiotherapy in patients with locally advanced rectal cancer through a newly formed rectal cancer consortium with complementary expertise

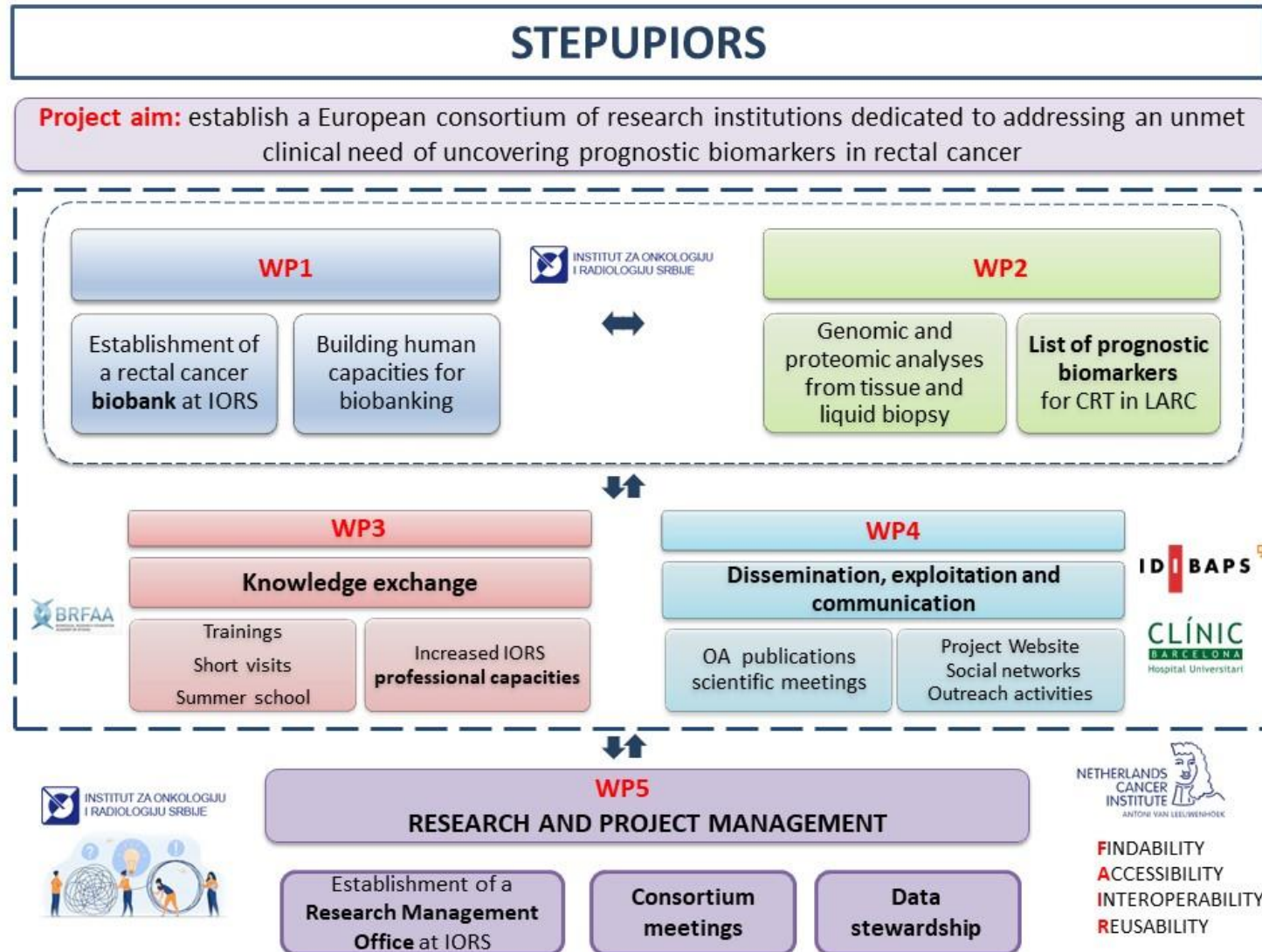
## Objective 2

Strengthen the research, management and administrative abilities of the Institute for Oncology and Radiology of Serbia (IORS) located in Belgrade, Serbia along with the establishment of a rectal cancer biobank

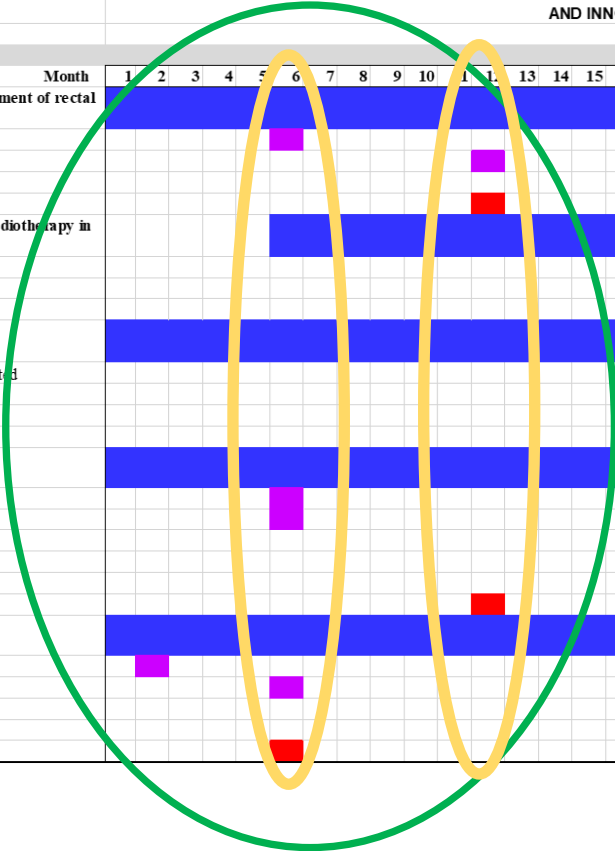
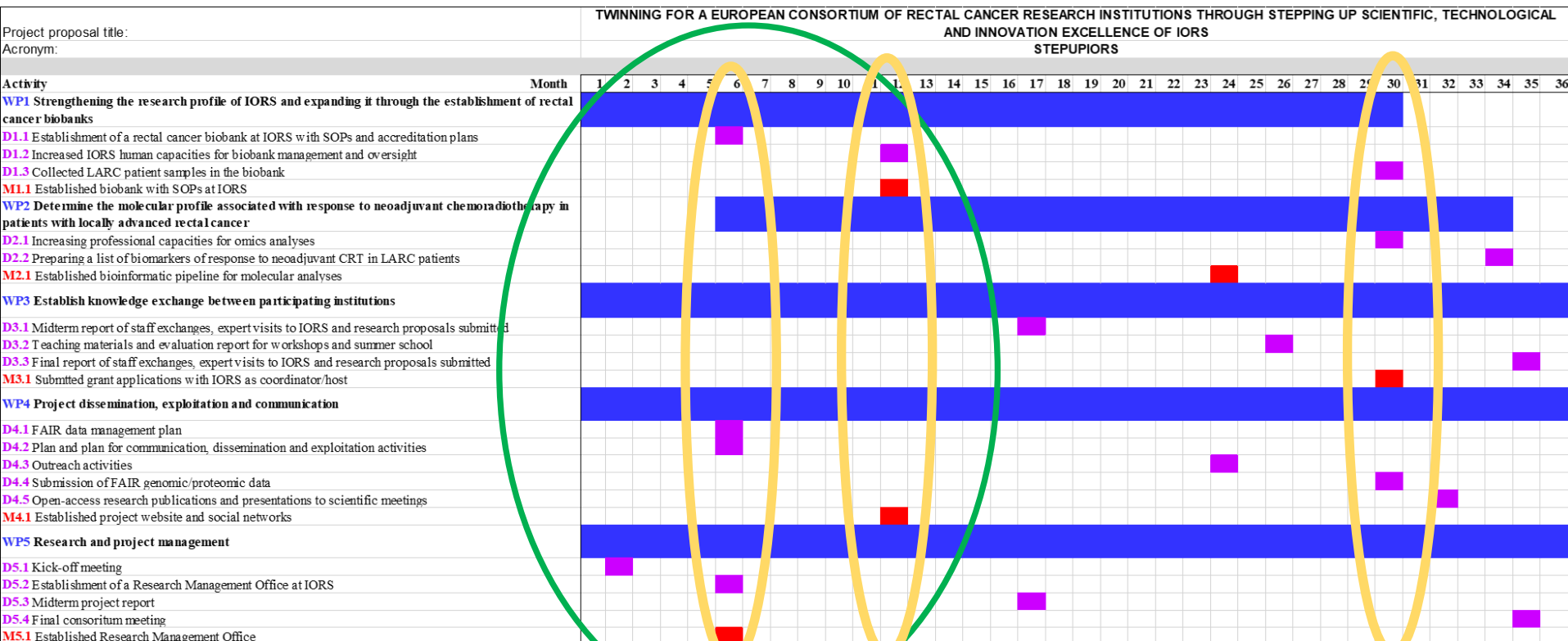
## Objective 3

Establish a long-lasting knowledge, personnel, and sample exchange between partner institutions in the rectal cancer consortium.

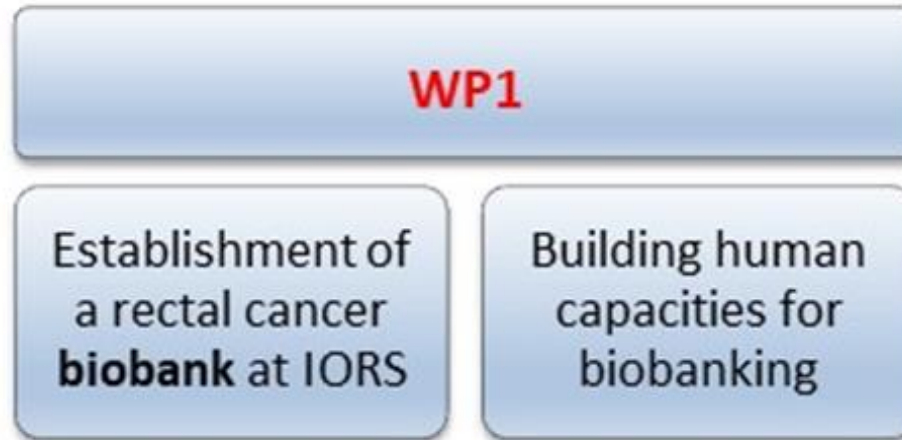
# Pert chart



# Gantt chart



# Establishment of a biobank





# Establishment of a biobank



STEPUPIORS - 101079217

Milestone 1

## STEPUPIORS

Twinning for a European Consortium of Rectal Cancer Research Institutions through Stepping up Scientific, Technological and Innovation Excellence of IORS

Funded by the European Union Project number: 101079217



Work Package No: 1

Milestone No: M1

Milestone Name: Established biobank with SOPs at IORS

Means of verification: 1. A biobank that is up and running 2. Prepared Biobanking SOPs

Due Date: September 30, 2023

Final Version Date: September 29, 2023



# Establishment of a biobank

## SWOT ANALYSIS



### STRENGTHS

1. Team members with advanced knowledge and skills for processing of biospecimens;
2. Large patient base allowing comprehensive collecting strategy;
3. Good logistics management between clinicians and biobank staff;
4. Well integrated bioethical framework.



### WEAKNESSES

1. Limited storage and working space available in the current facility;
2. Staff with no previous hands-on experience in biobank management;
3. No legal support to establish a self-sustainability plan;
4. Project-based funding.



### OPPORTUNITIES

1. Biobanking is a rapid growing sector worldwide;
2. First official biobank at the national level;
3. Collaboration with national and international research groups in the field of rectal cancer;
4. Vast opportunities for online and insight education in biobank management.



### THREATS

1. No legal support to employ additional administrative and laboratory operative personnel;
2. Lack of defined national legislative regulations for development of a non-transplant tissue banks;
3. Lack of established national accreditation path;
4. Future perspectives may be at risk due to unexpected limitations caused by new national regulations.

# Establishment of a first Research Management Office at the Institute for Oncology and Radiology of Serbia (WP5)

- Increasing professional capacities - Enhance the research, management, and administration abilities of IORS staff
- Perform continuous monitoring of project activities, risk mitigation and data quality control
- Enable advanced partners to examine and reconsider their research, management and administrative practices - **EU level sustainability and circularity**

# Establishment of a first Research Management Office at the Institute for Oncology and Radiology of Serbia (WP5)



Certified true translation from Serbian into the English language No.69/2023  
Belgrade, 22 March 2023

INSTITUTE FOR ONCOLOGY AND RADIOLOGY OF SERBIA  
Belgrade, 12-14 Pasterova Street  
Number: 01-1/2023/498 dated 08/03/2023

Based on the Article 19 of the Statute of the Institute for Oncology and Radiology of Serbia, I make the following

## DECISION on the formation of the STEPUPIORS – 101079217 Project Research Management Team

A team is being formed to monitor the implementation of: STEPUPIORS – TWINNING FOR A EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM OF RECTAL CANCER RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS THROUGH STEPPING UP SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL AND INNOVATION EXCELLENCE OF IORS, HORIZON-WIDERA – 2021, 101079217 Project, composed of:

- 1) Milena Čavić, PhD, Senior Research Associate, team leader;
- 2) Radmila Janković, PhD, Principal Research Fellow, head of the Sector for Scientific Research and Educational Activities, deputy team leader;
- 3) Marko Radulović, PhD, Principal Research Fellow, member;
- 4) Ana Đurić, PhD, Research Associate, member;
- 5) Bojan Ljubisavljević, Bachelor of Laws, Assistant Director of Non-Medical Affairs, member;
- 6) Branka Krivić, Bachelor of Laws, Head of Legal, Personnel and Administrative Affairs, member;
- 7) Kosana Surdanov, Bachelor of Economics, Head of Financial and Accounting Affairs, member;
- 8) Miloš Kukulj, Bachelor of Laws, Head of Public Procurement Affairs; member;
- 9) Zorana Bizetić, Bachelor of Mathematics, Head of Information Systems and Technology Affairs, member;
- 10) Jelica Perović, professional medical laboratory technologist, member;
- 11) Milica Matas, professional medical laboratory technologist, member;

The task of the Team from Paragraph 1 of this Decision is to monitor the implementation of „STEPUPIORS – TWINNING FOR A EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM OF RECTAL CANCER RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS THROUGH STEPPING UP SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL AND INNOVATION EXCELLENCE OF IORS, HORIZON-WIDERA – 2021, 101079217“ Project, in accordance with the Grant Agreement concluded by the Research Executive Agency (REA) within the powers delegated by the European Commission as one Contracting Party and the coordinator the Institute for Oncology and Radiology of Serbia and other beneficiaries Idryma Iatroviologinkon Ereunon Akademias Athinon (Biomedical Research Foundation Academy of Athens, Greece (BRFAA), Consorci Institut D Investigacions Biomediques August Pi I Sunyer



# Developing a circular and sustainable bioeconomy for Europe



# Training activities

## Use training activities to enhance research – be creative

- lectures by the Consortium
- lectures by invited experts from the academia
- lectures by invited experts from the private sector, other stakeholders or end-users
- talks by researchers submitting their works for presentation
- talks by the Consortium
- talks by invited experts from the academia
- talks by invited experts from the private sector or other stakeholders and end-users
- practical activities
- field trips (natural sites, industry, laboratories, etc.)
- networking events (any format, but envisaging the enlargement of participants' network)
- extracurricular activities

# STEPUPIORS vision and mission

## ACHIEVE SCIENTIFIC PROJECT GOALS

**COLLABORATE**



**GROW PERSONALLY**



**GROW AS A TEAM**



# Twinning community in evolution



BIOLA@WEB





# Acknowledgements

**IDIBAPS**

 **Clínic  
Barcelona**

 **UNIVERSITAT DE  
BARCELONA**

**CONSORCI INSTITUT D'INVESTIGACIONS  
BIOMEDIQUES AUGUST PI I SUNYER**

**HOSPITAL CLINIC DE BARCELONA**

**CASTELLVÍ-BEL, SERGI  
ABOLAFIA, JUAN MANUEL  
FREY, CAMILLE MARTINE MARIE  
PULIDO, MARTA  
FERRER, NURIA  
CONESA, RUTH  
TEKELI, ISIL  
BOTTA, TERESA  
ALCAÑIZ, ELIA  
LLOBET, ARNAU  
ARBOS, DANIEL  
RODRIGUEZ, AINA  
DOMINGUEZ, XAVIER  
OCAÑA, TERESA  
MOREIRA, LETICIA  
VILAVELLA, ROSA**

# Acknowledgements



BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION  
ACADEMY OF ATHENS, GREECE

**ZOIDAKIS, IERONYMOS MAKIS  
CHRISTOS, ILIOUDIS  
VLAHOU, ANTONIA  
PASCHALIDIS, NIKOLAOS  
MAKRIDAKIS, MANOUSOS  
LYGIROU, VASILIKI  
KONTOSTATHI, GEORGIA  
STAMATOPOULOS, VASSILIS  
TZORTZATOU, OLGA  
PAPADEMOS, LUCAS**

# Acknowledgements



**THE NETHERLANDS CANCER INSTITUTE  
ANTONI VAN LEEUWENHOEK**

**FIJNEMAN, REMOND  
BIERKENS, MARISKA  
DE WIT, MEIKE  
LAKBIR, SOUFYAN  
CLOSA, ADRIA  
HORATI, OMIED  
VAN LUENEN, HENRI G.A.M.**

# Acknowledgements



INSTITUT ZA ONKOLOGIJU  
I RADIOLOGIJU SRBIJE

INSTITUTE FOR ONCOLOGY AND RADIOLOGY OF SERBIA

JANKOVIĆ, RADMILA  
STOJANOVIĆ-RUNDIĆ, SUZANA  
KRIVOKUĆA, ANA  
TANIĆ, MILJANA  
ĐURIĆ, ANA  
ĐORĐIĆ CRNOGORAC, MARIJA  
RADULOVIĆ, MARKO  
BJELOGRLIĆ, SNEŽANA  
VULETIĆ, ANA  
MIRJAČIĆ-MARTINOVIĆ, KATARINA  
MARINKOVIĆ, MLADEN  
STANOJEVIĆ, ALEKSANDRA  
SPASIĆ, JELENA  
DAMJANOVIĆ VELIČKOVIĆ, ANA  
ČAVIĆ, MILENA

ŽIVIĆ, KATARINA  
ŽIVIĆ, KRISTINA  
DRINIĆ, ALEKSANDRA  
VUKOVIĆ, MIODRAG  
KARADŽIĆ, VALENTINA  
  
JURIŠIĆ, BUDIMIR  
KRIVIĆ, BRANKA  
SURDANOV, KOSANA  
KUKULJ, MILOŠ  
RISTIĆ, DANIJELA  
BIZETIĆ, ZORANA  
LJUBISAVLJEVIĆ, BOJAN

# Project visibility

 [stepupiors@gmail.com](mailto:stepupiors@gmail.com)

 [stepupiors](https://www.linkedin.com/company/stepupiors)

 [stepupiors](https://www.facebook.com/stepupiors)

 [@stepupiors](https://twitter.com/stepupiors)

 [www.stepupiors.eu](http://www.stepupiors.eu)

# Project outreach



# STEPUPIORS

Twinning for a European Consortium of Rectal Cancer Research Institutions through Stepping up Scientific, Technological and Innovation Excellence of IORS



Funded by  
the European Union

Project number: 101079217



INSTITUT ZA ONKOLOGIJU  
I RADIOLOGIJU SRBIJE



**GOOD LUCK!**

[milena.cavic@ncrc.ac.rs](mailto:milena.cavic@ncrc.ac.rs)

[www.stepupiors.eu](http://www.stepupiors.eu)