



Conference report on 16th Symposium on Bacterial Genetics and Ecology (BAGECO) 2023

Introduction

The Symposium on Bacterial Genetics and Ecology (BAGECO) has established itself over the decades as a prominent biennial event in the field of bacterial genetics and ecology. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the symposium had to be postponed for two years, resulting in a significant setback. Nevertheless, the anticipation culminated in the realization of BAGECO 2023, an event that aimed to explore interactions across microbial ecosystems. This symposium, held in Copenhagen, brought together renowned researchers from around the world to engage in discussions encompassing various facets of microbiology, microbial ecology, and metagenomics.

BAGECO 2023 continued the tradition of uniting leading scholars from both academia and industry. By integrating researchers with diverse expertise, including single-cell analysis, community ecology, and a wide array of experimental and computational tools, the symposium navigated the cutting edge of knowledge and innovation in the field.

Themes and Topics

Over the course of the 5 days, academics and industry representatives discussed scientific and commercialization capabilities. Those including topics like:

- Host-microbe symbioses (host-microbe interactions in animal and plants systems)
- Microbe-microbe interactions (bacteria-virus-fungi interactions in host systems and in biofilms)
- Horizontal gene transfer and barriers (MGEs, AMRs and defense systems)
- New approaches/technologies in microbial ecology (recent breakthroughs in infrastructure, bioinformatic tools, and methodologies that can be applied)
- Microbes and the green transition (applied aspects of microbiology in agro- and biotech with special focus on climate change and green transition)

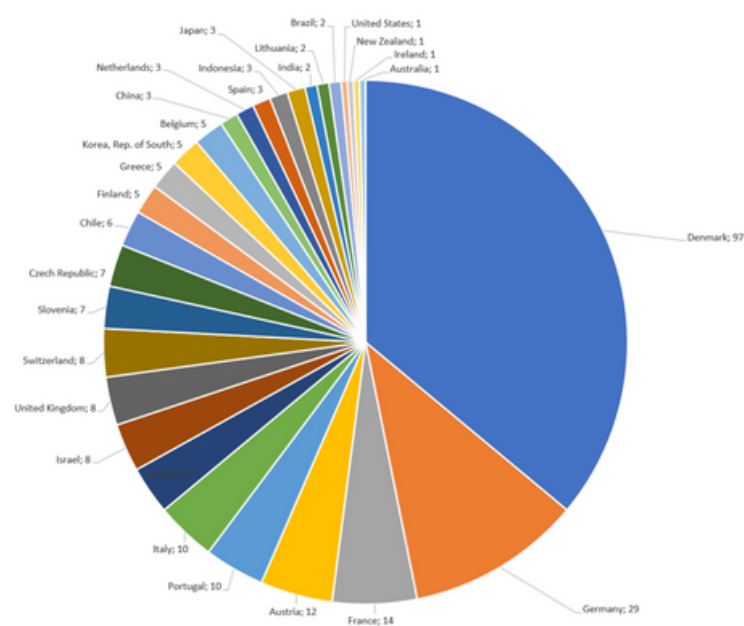
Audience and Participation

BAGECO 2023 had been thoughtfully designed to encourage the active involvement of both early- and mid-career scientists. The symposium offered a platform for these emerging researchers to disseminate their work within an interactive and engaging setting. Furthermore, industry partners were invited to showcase the latest advancements, facilitating a bridge between academia and practical applications.

Numbers:

- 270 Participants
- 216 Posters
- 170 Participants joined the Conference Dinner
- 116 Of the participants were students (incl. PhD students)
- 29 Countries represented
- 15 Oral Sessions
- 14 Speakers

Participants per country



Country	Participants
Denmark	97
Germany	29
France	14
Austria	12
Portugal	10
Italy	10
Sweden	8
Israel	8
United Kingdom	8
Switzerland	8
Slovenia	7
Czech Republic	7
Chile	6
Finland	5
Greece	5
Korea, Rep. of South	5
Belgium	5
China	3
Netherlands	3
Spain	3
Indonesia	3
Japan	3
India	2
Lithuania	2
Brazil	2
United States	1
New Zealand	1
Ireland	1
Australia	1



Networking and Experience

In addition to the scientific program, the symposium provided ample opportunities for attendees to interact with esteemed scientists, fostering collaborations and knowledge exchange. Beyond the academic sphere, participants also had the chance to immerse themselves in Copenhagen's distinct culture and modern ambiance.

Excerpt of participant feedback

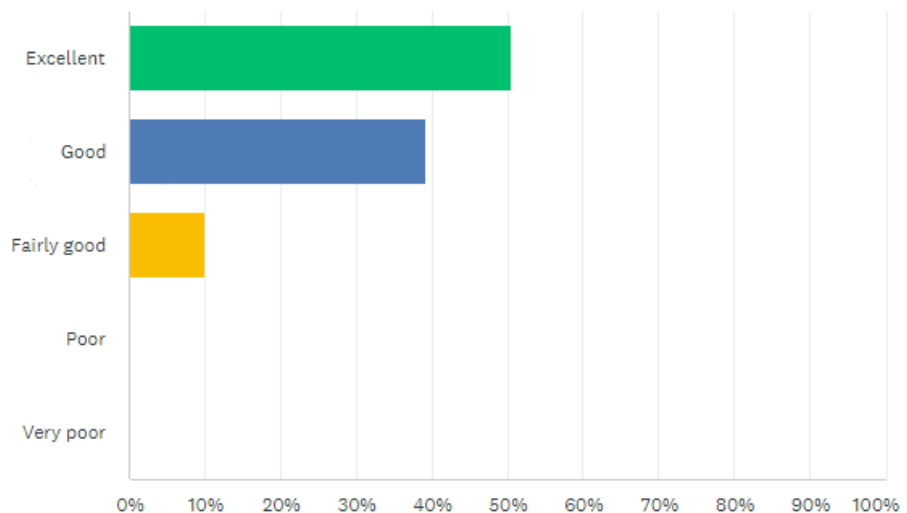
Based on the feedback, the 90 participants who responded to the questionnaire were happy with the conference. With question 1: *What was your overall impression of the conference?*, the responses in the table show that 0% found the conference poor, while 87.78% thought it was good or above.

For question 7: *Was there something you thought was exceptionally interesting?*, some of the respondents mentioned "The opening lecture given by Michael Wagner", "New technologies were very interesting", "the variability of topics", "very different posters were exceptionally interesting, great discussions"

Answer Choiced	Responses
Excellent	42,22 % (38)
Good	45,56 % (41)
Fairly good	12,22 % (11)
Poor	0% (0)

What was your overall impression of the programme?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 1

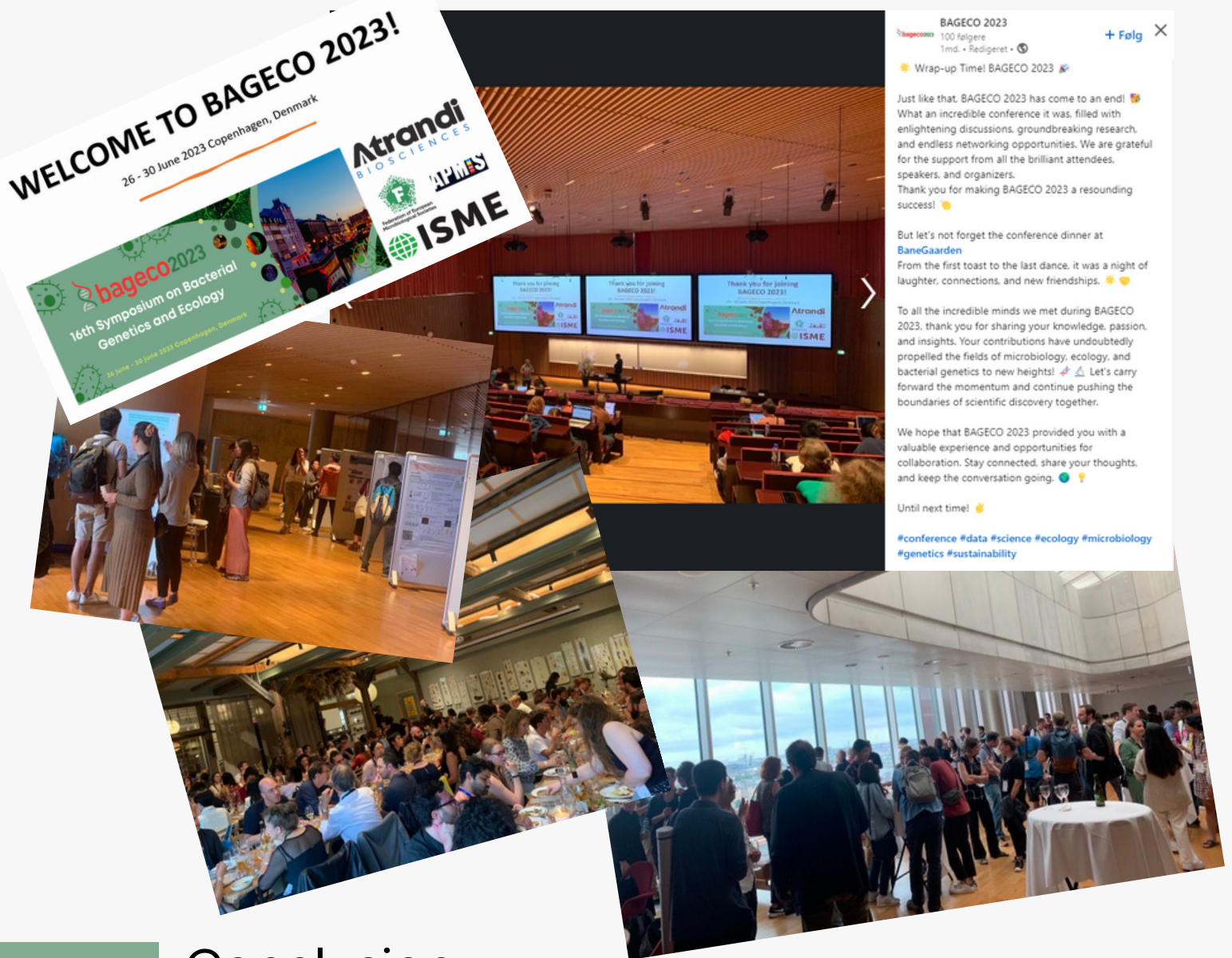


Based on question 4, which is also illustrated in the graph above, there was absolutely no one who thought the programme was bad. A total of 50.56% said it was excellent, which is also supported by some of the answers from question 2: *Was there something you thought went exceptionally well?*, which sounded "All the talks and the schedule", "The diversity of topics of the talks". Thus, it can be assumed that the conference really had a programme that was interesting and relevant to the target group.

Question 13 was "Will you recommend BAGECO to others?" to which 89.41% answered yes, which is positive and is assumed to have an effect as question 14 asked "From where did you hear about the conference?" to which 70.79% answered from a colleague. Therefore, word of mouth is important for such a conference.

ISME Grant

We have devoted the opening key-note lecture by Michael Wagner as a dedicated ISME session. Michael Wagner is a former ISME president, a brilliant representative of ISME, and in his talk he has presented key ISME related topics under the headline: "Seeing is understanding: Next generation chemical imaging for super-fast functional analyses of microbiomes". In addition, ISME funds were also spent on promotion on LinkedIn to create awareness of the symposium among a relevant target audience.



Conclusion

BAGECO 2023 stood as a beacon of scientific inquiry and collaboration in the realm of bacterial genetics and ecology. With its thematic focus on interactions across microbial ecosystems and a diverse array of topics, the symposium catalyzed advancements in understanding the intricate world of microorganisms. By bringing together researchers, early-career scientists, and industry partners, BAGECO 2023 shaped the trajectory of microbiological research and its practical applications.