

GEMSTONE Project

Newsletter 2024



Excellence in
Neuroscience



Funded by
the European Union



Introduction

Welcome to the 2024 edition of the GEMSTONE Newsletter!

As a Horizon Europe-funded initiative, GEMSTONE continues to strengthen research and innovation capacities at Acibadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University (ACU) in gene engineering technologies and neuroscience, in collaboration with our esteemed partners Lund University (ULUND) and ICONS.

This year marked significant milestones for GEMSTONE, with activities spanning project management, cutting-edge research, continuous capacity building, and widespread dissemination, all contributing to the advancement of our mission.

Here's an in-depth look at our progress in 2024!



ACIBADEM
ÜNİVERSİTESİ



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The GEMSTONE Project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the grant agreement number 1010789881. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union, European Commission or European Research Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

1. Research Milestones



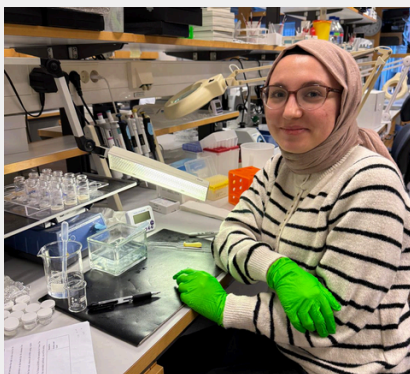
Chemogenetics Course

ACU hosted a two-day course in January, combining theoretical insights with practical sessions on chemogenetic tools for neural modulation. Esteemed instructors, including Prof. Filiz Onat and experts from ULUND, guided participants through EEG recordings, stereotaxic surgery, and chemogenetic manipulations. This hybrid event empowered attendees with cutting-edge skills in neuroscience research.



MEA Hands-On Workshop

In November, GEMSTONE organized a hands-on workshop on Multi-Electrode Array (MEA) technology. This two-day event at ACU provided in-depth training on neuronal network functionality and electrophysiological data analysis. Featuring experts from 3Brain and ULUND, participants engaged in advanced experiments using brain tissue samples and analyzed extracellular activity, enhancing their technical expertise.



Research Visits

GEMSTONE facilitated several research exchanges, such as PhD student Nursima Mutlu's two-month visit to ULUND. Under the guidance of Assoc. Prof. My Andersson, she investigated cortical layer development, introducing immunohistochemical techniques and innovative microscopy methods to ACU's protocols.

2. Capacity Building Achievements



Training on Financial Reporting and Audits

A specialized course on financial reporting for EU-funded projects was led by Serena Cogoni of ICONS. The training equipped ACU's Technology Transfer Office and finance staff with essential skills, ensuring compliance and effective management of project finances.



Seminar on Open Access Publication

Ayca Aydemir Mazlumoglu, ACU Library Director, gave a seminar on open access publication and the respective EU policy, providing in-depth information about the importance and impact of OA publishing, transformative agreements, Horizon Europe commitments, and the latest developments.



Staff Visits to ULUND and ICONS

- GEMSTONE Project Manager Oguzhan Altinkoz participated in an intensive project management program at ICONS, enhancing ACU's administrative capabilities.
- ACU Library Director Ayca Aydemir Mazlumoglu's visit to ULUND focused on open science practices, fostering transparency and inclusivity in academic publishing.



Networking and Collaboration

- Dr. Annika Luttjohann from the University of Munster visited ACU, bringing valuable knowledge to the GEMSTONE team, promoting scientific exchange and collaboration.
- Events like the Parkinson's disease networking meeting facilitated dialogue between ACU researchers and international experts, exploring collaborative opportunities in neurodegenerative disease research. These interactions sparked innovative project ideas and reinforced ACU's global connections.



See all 2024 news in Work Packages 4 and 5:

- [Scientific research visit to GEMSTONE team by Dr. Annika Luttjohann](#)
- [GEMSTONE seminar on EU and open access publication](#)
- [GEMSTONE researchers attend Immuparknet meeting in Belgrade](#)
- [GEMSTONE networking meeting: Which areas could research groups collaborate on Parkinson's disease?](#)
- [ACU staff visit ULUND for capacity building](#)
- [GEMSTONE training on financial reporting and audits in EU-funded projects organized](#)
- [GEMSTONE Project Manager Oguzhan Altinkoz attends training at ICONS](#)
- [ACU Library and Electronic Resources Manager attends training at ULUND](#)



3. Dissemination and Engagement



Symposia and Events

- GEMSTONE hosted impactful symposia, including Challenges and Developments in Parkinson's and Neurodegenerative Diseases Symposium, which featured global experts and highlighted advancements in alpha-synuclein research and double transgenic models.
- Drawing over 200 participants, Neuroscience Symposium on Approaches to Epilepsy was held in a collaborative effort with ACUTBAT, addressing epilepsy from preclinical and clinical perspectives.

ACU Graduate Programmes Information Days

Our team engaged with early-stage researchers, highlighting the impact of the GEMSTONE Project and the contribution of the Horizon Europe programme.

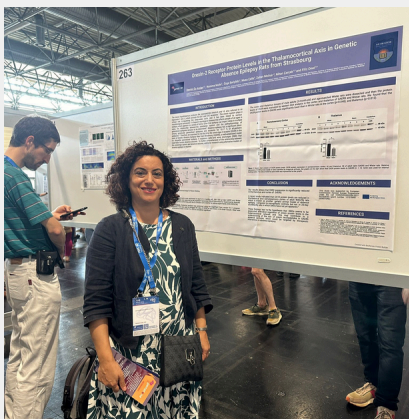
Horizon Results Booster Membership

To transform the research into tangible and lasting impact, GEMSTONE became a member of Booster, an EC initiative to provide services to EU-funded projects, to help navigate the complexities of dissemination and exploitation.



Video Series Launch

To celebrate 2024's achievements, GEMSTONE introduced a video series highlighting the project's vision and the team's contributions. Available on GEMSTONE's YouTube channel, the series promotes our mission to advance neuroscience research.



International Presence

Our researchers presented at premier conferences such as the FENS Forum, EARMA Conference, and EMC Congress, showcasing GEMSTONE's outputs and engaging with the international scientific community. Notably, Assoc. Prof. Merve Acikel Elmas' poster on the neuroprotective effects of swimming training drew significant interest at EMC 2024.



See all 2024 news in Work Package 6:

- [GEMSTONE researchers attend EARMA 2024 Conference](#)
- [Dr. Devrim Oz Arslan represents GEMSTONE at FENS Forum 2024](#)
- [GEMSTONE to be represented at EMC 2024 in Copenhagen](#)
- [Dr. Merve Acikel Elmas represents GEMSTONE at EMC 2024](#)
- [GEMSTONE dissemination event: Challenges and Developments in Parkinson's and Neurodegenerative Diseases](#)
- [GEMSTONE hosts dissemination event on Parkinson's and neurodegenerative diseases](#)
- [GEMSTONE team to join in Graduate Programmes Information Days at ACU](#)
- [GEMSTONE's successful attendance at ACU Graduate Programmes Information Days](#)
- [GEMSTONE & ACUTBAT Neuroscience Symposium on approach to epilepsy](#)
- [GEMSTONE & ACUTBAT Neuroscience Symposium illuminates the path to advancing epilepsy research](#)
- [GEMSTONE launches video series showcasing project team members](#)



4. Project Management Highlights

Mid-Term Review Meeting

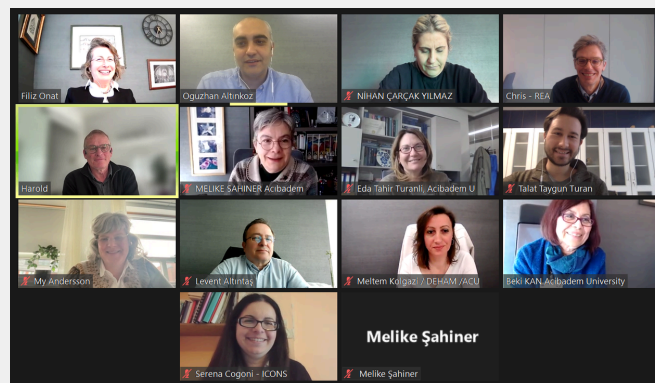
In a pivotal milestone for GEMSTONE, the mid-term review meeting was held, bringing together our project team, partners from ULUND and ICONS, and representatives from the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Led by Prof. Filiz Onat, the meeting showcased our progress and strategies, earning praise from Mr. Christopher Niehaus (REA) and Prof. Harold Cremer (Institut de Biologie du Developpement de Marseille). This collaborative session underscored GEMSTONE's commitment to excellence and set a clear path for future achievements.

Independent Advisory Board Meeting

Held in Istanbul, the IAB meeting engaged key stakeholders, including ACU Rector Prof. Ahmet Sahin and esteemed board members such as Suha Taspolatoglu, CEO of Abdi Ibrahim Pharmaceuticals. Discussions focused on the project's accomplishments over 24 months and strategic planning for the coming year, reaffirming GEMSTONE's vision and objectives.

See all 2024 news in Work Package 1:

- [GEMSTONE mid-term review meeting held successfully](#)
- [Successful IAB meeting for GEMSTONE Project](#)



Looking Ahead

As we conclude 2024, GEMSTONE continues its journey to position ACU as a leading force in neuroscience research. In 2025, we remain committed to fostering innovation, collaboration, and excellence in neuroscience.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our distinguished partners, researchers, and stakeholders for their unwavering support. Together, we are making strides toward a brighter future for neurodevelopmental research.

Stay connected with us through our website and social media channels and subscribe for updates on upcoming events and discoveries!

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