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## Supplementary material 2

# Validation of ASaiM framework and its workflows on HMP mock community samples

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ASaiM framework and its workflows are tested and validated on two mock metagenomic datasets of a controlled microbiota community (with 22 known microbial strains). These datasets are available on *EBI metagenomics* dataset.

Taxonomic and functional results produced by ASaiM framework are extensively analyzed and compared with results obtained with *EBI metagenomics* pipeline (Hunter *et al.*, 2014). Details about these analyses (workflows, scripts) are available on a dedicated GitHub repository and results with all intermediary and final files on Zenodo.

The main workflow produces accurate and precise taxonomic assignments, wide functional results (gene families, pathways, GO slim terms) and relations between taxonomic and functional results, in few hours on a standard computer. Hence, these analyses validate ASaiM framework and its main workflow.

## 1 Data

Two HMP mock community samples are available on *EBI metagenomics* database. Both samples contain a genomic mixture of 22 microbial strains (Table 1) with differences in abundances of the strains. In first sample (SRR072232), the rRNA operon counts vary by up to four orders of magnitude per strains (Table 1), whereas second sample (SRR072233) contains equimolar ribosomal rRNA operon counts per strain (Table 1).

Both samples were sequenced using 454 GS FLX Titanium to get 1,22,169 raw metagenomic sequences for first dataset and 1,386,198 raw metagenomic sequences for second dataset.

## 2 Methods

Both datasets have been analyzed using ASaiM framework. The results are extensively analyzed and compared to expected results and *EBI metagenomics* results. Details about these analyses (workflows, scripts) are available on a dedicated GitHub repository and results with all intermediary and final files on Zenodo.

### 2.1 Abundance computation using mapping on reference genomes

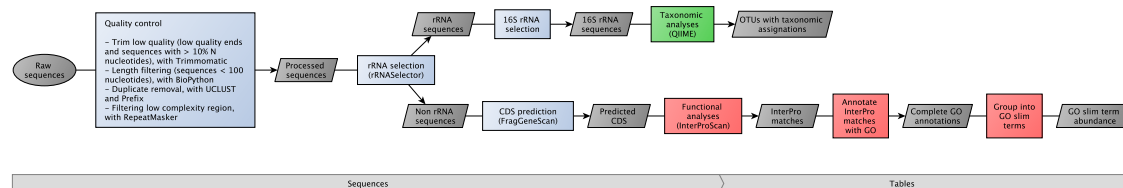
Expected abundances of strains are based on rRNA operon counts added for each strains to simulate the mock microbiota. To get “real” abundances of expected strains in metagenomic databases, sequences after sequencing are mapped on genomes of expected strains using BWA (Li and Durbin, 2009, 2010).

Domain	Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Taxonomy				Strains	Abundances	
				Order	Family	Genus	Species		SRR072232	SRR072233
Archaea	Archaea	Euryarchaeota	Methanobacteria	Methanobacteriales	Methanobacteriaceae	<i>Methanobrevibacter</i>	<i>Methanobrevibacter smithii</i>	ATCC 35061	1,000,000	100,000
Bacteria	Bacteria	Actinobacteria	Actinobacteria	Actinomycetales	Actinomycetaceae	<i>Actinomyces</i>	<i>Actinomyces odontolyticus</i>	ATCC 17982	1,000	100,000
					Propionibacteriaceae	<i>Propionibacterium</i>	<i>Propionibacterium acnes</i>	DSM 16379	10,000	100,000
		Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Bacteroidaceae	<i>Bacteroides</i>	<i>Bacteroides vulgatus</i>	ATCC 8482	1,000	100,000
		Deinococcus-Thermus	Deinococci	Deinococcales	Deinococcaceae	<i>Deinococcus</i>	<i>Deinococcus radiodurans</i>	DSM 20539	1,000	100,000
		Firmicutes	Bacilli	Bacillales	Bacillaceae	<i>Bacillus</i>	<i>Bacillus cereus thuringiensis</i>	ATCC 10987	100,000	100,000
					Listeriaceae	<i>Listeria</i>	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	ATCC BAA-679	10,000	100,000
					Staphylococcaceae	<i>Staphylococcus</i>	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	ATCC BAA-1718	100,000	100,000
							<i>Staphylococcus epidermidis</i>	ATCC 12228	1,000,000	100,000
				Lactobacillales	Enterococcaceae	<i>Enterococcus</i>	<i>Enterococcus faecalis</i>	ATCC 47077	1,000	100,000
					Lactobacillaceae	<i>Lactobacillus</i>	<i>Lactobacillus gasseri</i>	DSM 20243	10,000	100,000
					Streptococcaceae	<i>Streptococcus</i>	<i>Streptococcus agalactiae</i>	ATCC BAA-611	100,000	100,000
							<i>Streptococcus mutans</i>	ATCC 700610	1,000,000	100,000
							<i>Streptococcus mitis oralis pneumoniae</i>	ATCC BAA-334	1,000	100,000
				Clostridia	Clostridiales	Clostridiaceae	<i>Clostridium</i>	ATCC 51743	100,000	100,000
		Proteobacteria	Alphaproteobacteria	Rhodobacterales	Rhodobacteraceae	<i>Rhodobacter</i>	<i>Rhodobacter sphaeroides</i>	ATCC 17023	1,000,000	100,000
			Betaproteobacteria	Neisseriales	Neisseriaceae	<i>Neisseria</i>	<i>Neisseria meningitidis</i>	ATCC BAA-335	10,000	100,000
			Epsilonproteobacteria	Campylobacterales	Helicobacteraceae	<i>Helicobacter</i>	<i>Helicobacter pylori</i>	ATCC 700392	10,000	100,000
			Gammaproteobacteria	Pseudomonadales	Moraxellaceae	<i>Acinetobacter</i>	<i>Acinetobacter baumannii</i>	ATCC 17978	10,000	100,000
					Pseudomonadaceae	<i>Pseudomonas</i>	<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>	ATCC 47085	100,000	100,000
				Enterobacteriales	Enterobacteriaceae	<i>Escherichia</i>	<i>Escherichia coli</i>	ATCC 70096	1,000,000	100,000
Eukaryotes	Fungi	Ascomycota	Saccharomycetes	Saccharomycetales	Debaryomycetaceae	<i>Candida</i>	<i>Candida albicans</i>	SC5314	1,000	100,000
Total									5,566,000	2,200,000

**Table 1.** Expected strains, their taxonomy and their ribosomal RNA operon counts (abundance, from metadata on EBI metagenomics database) on both samples (SRR072232 and SRR072233)

## 2.2 Analyses using *EBI Metagenomics*

Both datasets have been analysed with *EBI metagenomics* pipeline (Version 1.0) (Figure 1). Results are downloaded and formatted to help comparison with ASaiM results.



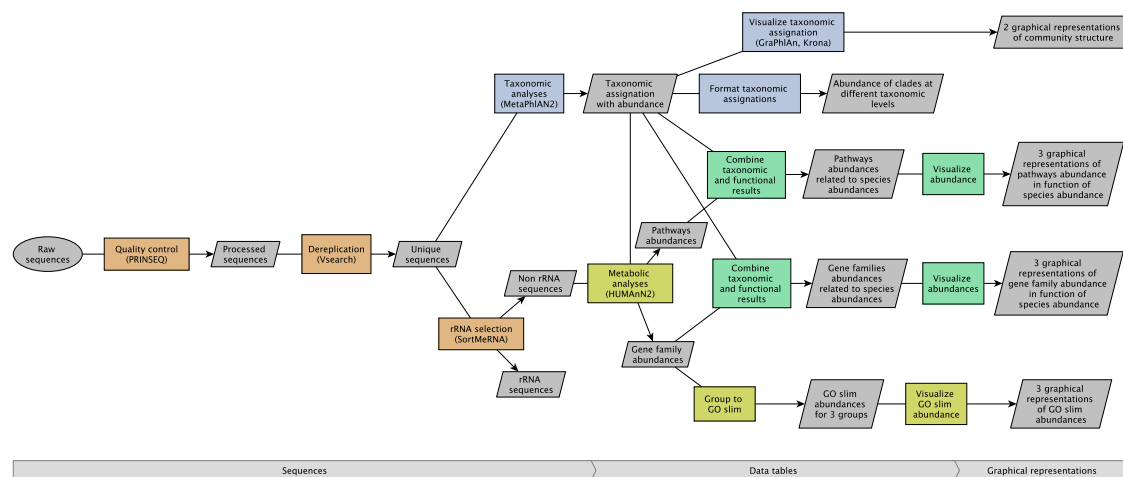
**Fig. 1.** EBI metagenomics pipeline (version 1.0). The grey boxes correspond to data, the blue boxes to pretreatment steps, the red boxes to functional analysis steps and the green boxes to taxonomic analysis steps.

OTUs with taxonomic assignment are extracted and aggregated to compute relative abundances of each clade at all taxonomic levels.

For functional analysis, 3 types of results are generated with *EBI metagenomics* pipeline (Figure 1): matches with InterPro, complete GO annotations and GO slim annotations. Here, we focus on GO slim annotations to compare with ASaiM results (Figure 2). Annotations are formatted to extract relative abundances (in percentage) of GO slim term annotations inside each GO slim term group (cellular components, biological processes and molecular functions).

## 2.3 Analyses using ASaiM framework

Main workflow (Figure 2) of ASaiM framework is used to analyze both datasets



**Fig. 2.** ASaiM workflow for analysis of raw single-end microbiota sequences. This workflow is available with ASaiM Galaxy instance and used to analyze both datasets. The grey boxes correspond to data, the blue boxes to pretreatment steps, the red boxes to functional analysis steps and the green boxes to taxonomic analysis steps.

For these analyses, ASaiM framework is deployed on a computer with Debian GNU/Linux System, 8 cores Intel(R) Xeon(R) at 2.40GHz and 32 Go of RAM. During workflow execution, size of used memory and execution time are checked (Table 2). Workflow execution is relatively fast: < 5h and < 5h30 for datasets with 1,225,169 and 1,386,198 sequences respectively (Table 2). The most time consuming step is functional assignment with *HUMAnN2* (Abubucker *et al.*, 2012) which last  $\simeq$  64% of overall time execution (Table 2). Size of the process in memory is stable over workflow execution (variability inferior to 40 kb) (Table 2).

Statistics		SRR072232	SRR072233
Execution time	Whole workflow	4h44	5h22
	PRINSEQ	0h38	0h44
	Vsearch	16s	19s
	SortMeRNA	0h55	0h58
	MetaPhlAN2	0h09	0h10
	HUMAnN2	3h01	3h26
Size of the process in memory (kb)	Min	1,515,732	1,515,732
	Mean	1,515,744	1,515,743
	Max	1,515,768	1,515,764

**Table 2.** Computation statistics on ASaiM for both samples (SRR072233 and SRR072232)

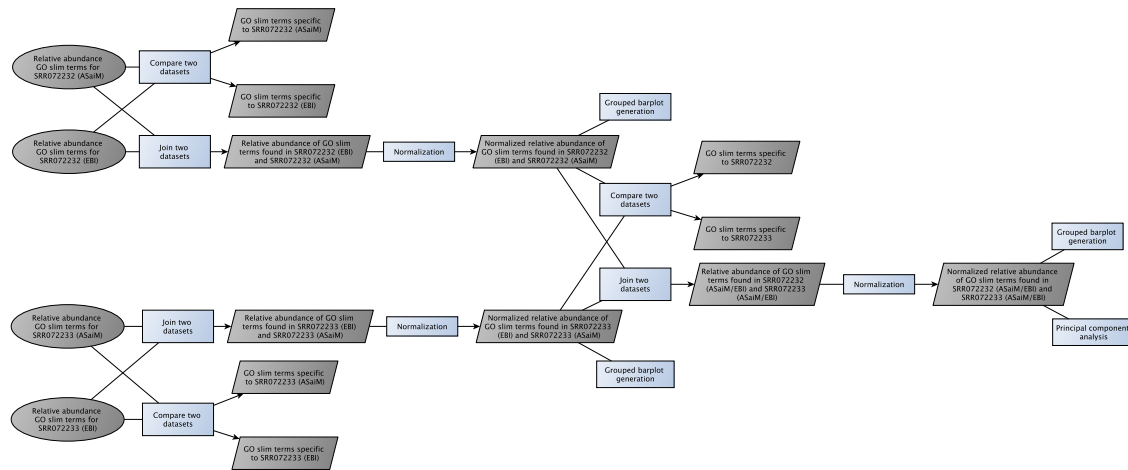
Comparative analysis workflows available with ASaiM framework are used to compare taxonomic and functional results of both datasets.

## 2.4 Comparison of *EBI metagenomics* results and ASaiM results

*EBI metagenomics* results and ASaiM ones are not directly comparable. Several processing steps are then needed.

With *MetaPhlAn* in ASaiM workflow, relative abundance of clades is computed on assigned reads. No count is made of non assigned reads. To compare relative abundances between both pipelines, we focus on relative abundances computed on OTUS or reads with a complete taxonomic assignation from kingdom to family. These results are also compared to relative abundances computed using mapping on genomes of expected strains.

In both *EBI metagenomics* and ASaiM workflows (Figures 1 and 2), functional matches are grouped into GO slim terms. These terms are a subset of the terms in the whole Gene Ontology with a focus on microbial metabolic functions. They give a broad overview of the ontology content. To compare *EBI metagenomics* and ASaiM results, relative abundance of GO slim terms for both samples and both workflows are concatenated and compared, given workflow depicted in Figure 3.



**Fig. 3.** Workflow to compare GO slim annotation abundances between samples (SRR072232, SRR072233) and workflows (EBI metagenomics, ASaiM). This workflow is available with ASaiM Galaxy instance. The grey boxes correspond to data, the blue boxes to processing steps.

### 3 Results

#### 3.1 Results of pretreatments in pipelines

In both workflows (Figures 1 and 2), raw sequences are pre-processed before any taxonomic or functional analysis. These preprocessing steps include quality control to remove low quality, small or duplicated sequences and also rRNA sorting to sort rRNA/rDNA sequences from non rRNA sequences (Figures 1 and 2). The used tools and parameters for these pretreatments are different between *EBI metagenomics* pipeline (Figure 1) and ASaiM workflow (Figure 2), inducing different pretreatment outputs (Table 3).

Sequences	SRR072232				SRR072233			
	EBI		ASaiM		EBI		ASaiM	
Raw sequences	1,225,169				1,386,198			
Sequences after quality control and dereplication	997,622	81.4%	1,175,853	96%	1,197,748	86.4%	1,343,451	96.9%
rDNA sequences	8,910	0.9%	16,016	1.4%	9,214	0.8%	13,850	1%
non rDNA sequences	988,712	99.1%	1,159,837	98.6%	1,188,534	99.2%	1,329,601	99%

**Table 3.** Statistics of pretreatments for EBI and ASaiM on both samples (SRR072233 and SRR072232)

Sequence number after quality control and dereplication is different in *EBI metagenomics* and ASaiM workflow results (Table 3). With ASaiM, more sequences (> 96 %) are conserved during these first steps of quality control and dereplication than with *EBI metagenomics* (< 87 %, Table 3). This difference may be explained by differences in threshold for minimum length. In *EBI metagenomics* pipeline, sequences with less than 100 nucleotides are removed, while in ASaiM the threshold is fixed to 60 nucleotides. However, this threshold difference does not explain all the observed difference in sequence number after quality control and dereplication. Indeed, when in ASaiM quality control with PRINSEQ (Schmieder and Edwards, 2011) is run with exactly same parameters but filtering of sequences with less than 100 nucleotides, 1,135,008 (92.6%) and 1,304,023 (94.1%) sequences are conserved for SRR072232 and SRR072233 respectively after quality control and dereplication. These proportion are still higher than the one observed with *EBI metagenomics* pipeline (Table 3). Smaller length threshold with ASaiM does not then explain all difference in sequence number after quality control and dereplication. Differences are induced by used tools and their underlying algorithms and implementations.

In both datasets and with both workflows, few rDNA sequences are found in datasets (Table 3). Indeed, these datasets are metagenomic datasets and then focus on gene sequences. Few copies of rRNA genes are found in organisms (bacteria, archaea or eukaryotes) and are then expected in metagenomic sequences. Despite small number of sequences, a difference of rRNA sequence number is observed between *EBI metagenomics* and ASaiM workflows (Table 3): higher proportions of rDNA sequences are systematically found with ASaiM workflow. *EBI metagenomics* pipeline (Figure 1) uses *rRNASelector* (Lee *et al.*, 2011) to select rDNA bacterial and archaeal sequences (no eukaryotes sequences). In ASaiM workflow (Figure 2), rRNA sequences are sorted using *SortMeRNA* (Kopylova *et al.*, 2012) and 8 databases for bacteria, archaea and also eukaryotes rRNA. < 5% of all sequences are matched against databases dedicated to eukaryotes rRNA sequences, and then does not explain all differences of rRNA sequence proportions between *EBI metagenomics* and ASaiM. This difference may be due to completeness of the databases: databases used by *rRNASelector* (Lee *et al.*, 2011) are older and probably less complete than SILVA (v119) databases used by *SortMeRNA* (Kopylova *et al.*, 2012).

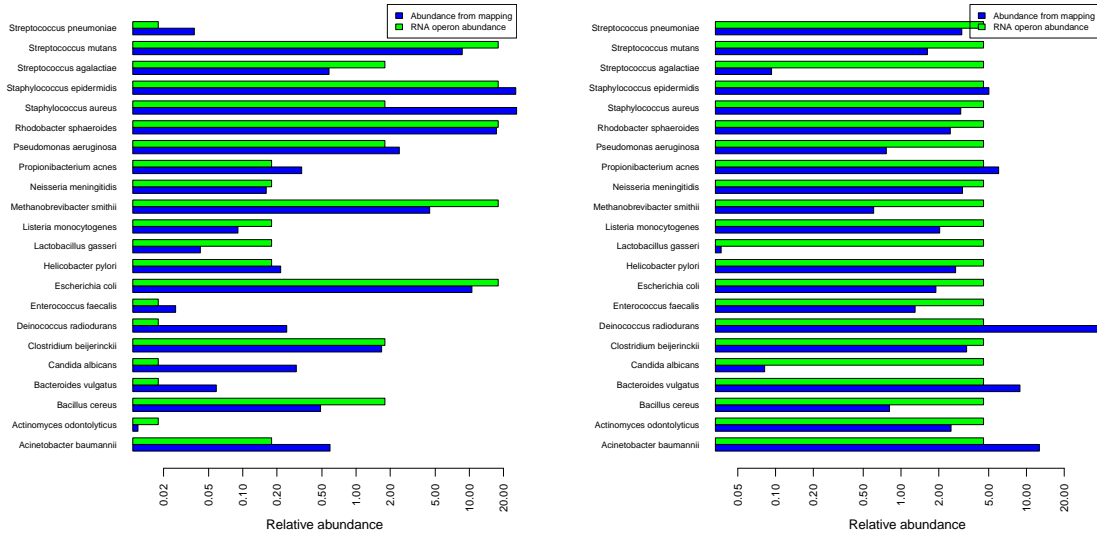
After pretreatments, for both samples, more sequences are then conserved for taxonomic and functional analyses in ASaiM workflow than in *EBI metagenomics* pipeline (Table 3).

#### 3.2 Taxonomic analyses

##### 3.2.1 Abundances of expected strains and taxonomy

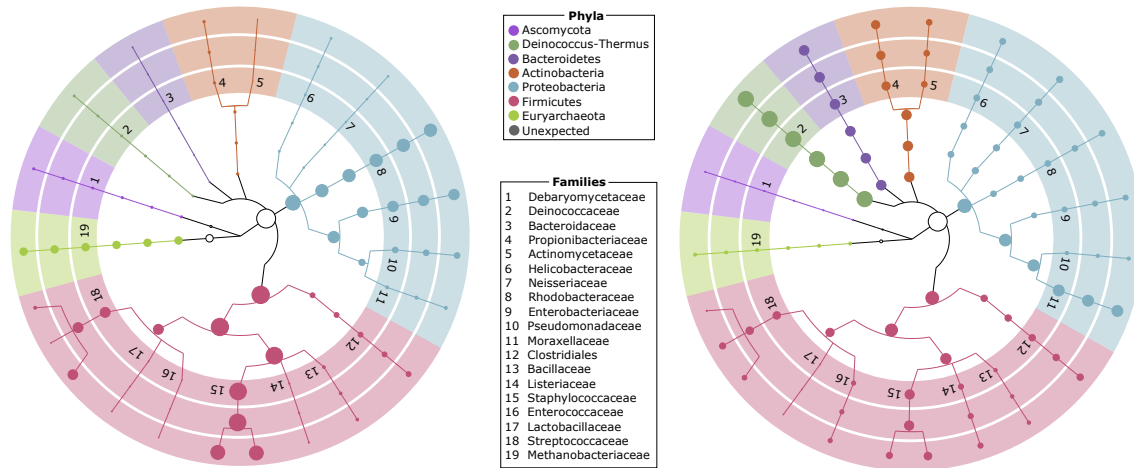
Raw metagenomic sequences of both samples are mapped on genomes of expected strains. Relative abundances based on mapping results are compared to relative abundances based on rRNA operon counts as described in sample metadata (Figure 4).

For SRR072232, similar variations in abundances between species are observed using mapping and rRNA operon count (Figure 4). Observations are different for SRR072233 (Figure 4): expected abundances (based on RNA operon abundances) are identical for all species, but unexpected variations are observed for mapping based abundances. These differences between expected abundances (from RNA operon counts) and mapping-based abundances may be due to bias induced during biological manipulations or sequencing.



**Fig. 4.** Comparison of relative abundances between expectation given the ribosomal RNA operon counts (green, Table 1) and mapping against reference genomes for both samples (SRR072232 on left, SRR072233 on right)

As taxonomic analyses in *EBI metagenomics* and ASaiM workflows are executed on metagenomic sequences, mapping based abundances are now used as expected abundances, instead of abundances based on rRNA operon counts from metadata (Figure 5).



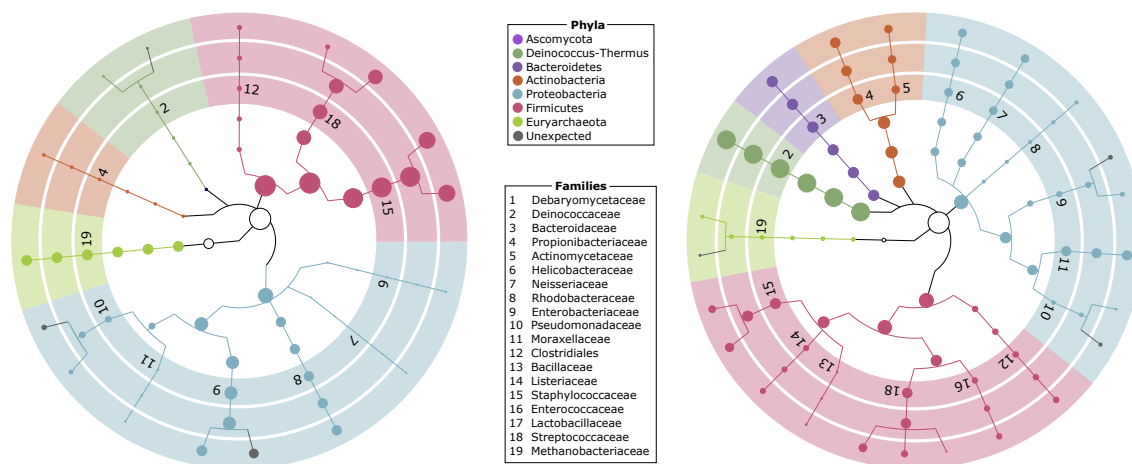
**Fig. 5.** Expected taxonomy for SRR072232 (left) and SRR072233 (right) from domains to species. Circle diameters at each taxonomic levels are proportional to mapping-based relative abundance of corresponding taxon.

### 3.2.2 Raw ASaiM results

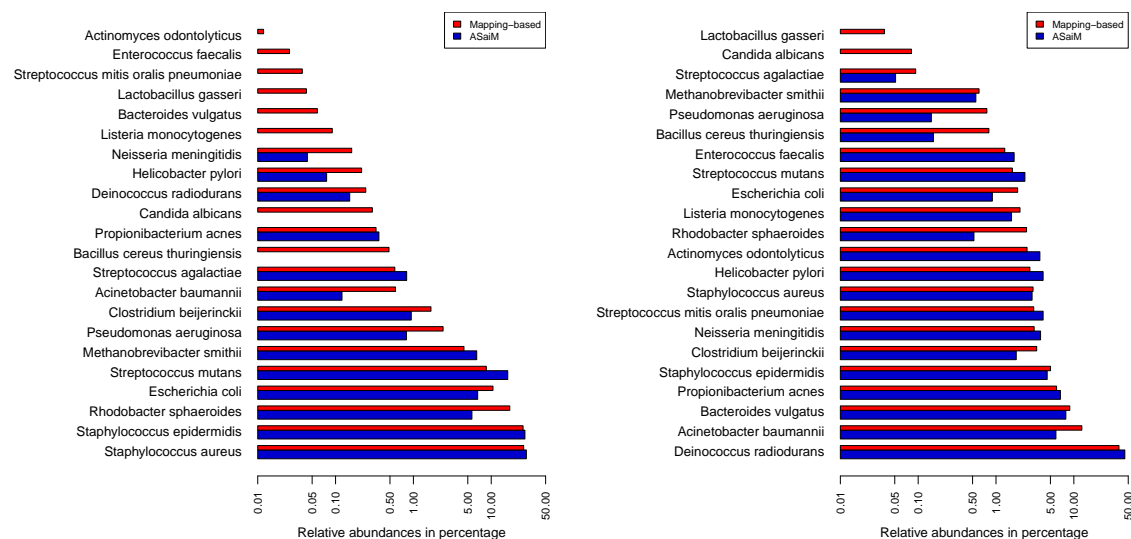
In ASaiM workflow (Figure 2), *MetaPhlAn* (2.0) (Truong *et al.*, 2015; Segata *et al.*, 2012) is used for taxonomic analyses on sequences after pretreatments. *MetaPhlAn* profiles the microbial community structure using a database of unique clade-specific marker genes

identified from 17,000 reference genomes. *MetaPhlAn* execution is fast in ASaiM workflow (less than 10 minutes for > 1,100,000 sequences, Table 2).

Raw *MetaPhlAn* results consist in a plain text file with relative abundance of clades at different taxonomic levels. Visualisation tools help to represent *MetaPhlAn* results. In ASaiM, two such tools are used: *Krona* (Ondov *et al.*, 2011) for interactive representations of taxonomic assignation and *GraPhlan* for static representations. Original static representations are modified (*e.g.* colors, numbers for families) to help comparison with expected taxonomy (Figure 6).



**Fig. 6.** Taxonomy for SRR072232 (left) and SRR072233 (right) from domains to species, found with ASaiM framework. Circle diameters at each taxonomic levels are proportional to mapping-based relative abundance of corresponding taxon. Colors and family numbers are the same as the ones used in Figure 5. Gray circles and lines represent unexpected lineages.



**Fig. 7.** Relative abundances (percentage in log scale) of expected species for SRR072232 (left) and SRR072233 (right) with comparison between expected abundances (red thin bars) and abundances obtained with ASaiM (blue wide bars)

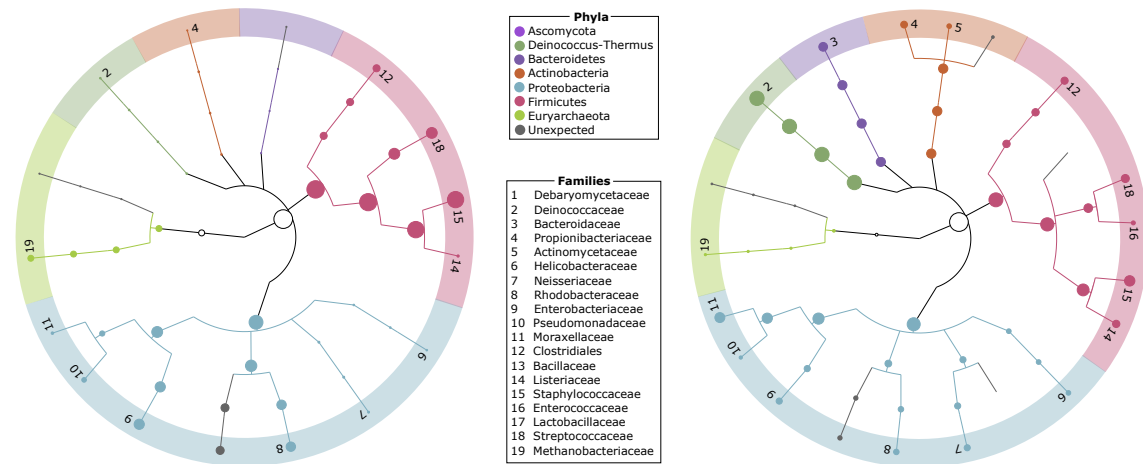
Despite same expected species, taxonomic diversity in SRR072232 dataset is reduced compared to the one in SRR072233 dataset (Figure 6). Less taxons are found for each taxonomic levels. And, from 22 expected species (Table 1), 17 are found for SRR072232 and 20 for SRR072233 (Figure 7). The 2 expected species (*Candidata albicans* and *Lactobacillus gasseri*) missing in SRR072233 dataset are also missing in SRR072232 dataset (Figure 7). Phylogenetic markers for these species may be missing in the database used by *MetaPhlAn*. On the other hand, few sequences of these species in SRR072233 are found using mapping on expected species genomes. The phylogenetic signal may be too low to detect these species. Hence, all species with mapping-based abundance smaller than 0.1% are not found using ASaiM for both datasets (Figure 7).

For SRR072232 datasets, two species with mapping-based abundance higher than 0.1% are not found: *Candida albicans* and *Bacillus cereus thuringiensis*. The first species is not found also with ASaiM in SRR072333, phylogenetic markers for this species may be missing in *MetaPhlAn2* database. As the second species is found with ASaiM in SRR072333, same explanation based on incompleteness of reference database.

### 3.2.3 Comparison with EBI results and expected taxonomy

After these first comparisons between ASaiM taxonomic results and expected ones, we compare ASaiM taxonomic results and *EBI metagenomics* taxonomic results.

In *EBI metagenomics* pipeline (Figure 1), *QIIME* (Caporaso *et al.*, 2010) is used on 16S sequences to identify OTUs and taxonomic assignation for these OTUs. In ASaiM (Figure 2), *MetaPhlAn* (Truong *et al.*, 2015; Segata *et al.*, 2012) is executed on sequences after quality control and dereplication, without any sorting step. *MetaPhlAn* (Truong *et al.*, 2015; Segata *et al.*, 2012) searches diverse phylogenetic markers, not only 16S ones as *QIIME* (Caporaso *et al.*, 2010) does, on all sequence types (rDNA, non rDNA, ...). Inside so different sequences, proportion of sequences with precise and “unique” phylogenetic markers is smaller. Indeed, with *MetaPhlAn* (Truong *et al.*, 2015; Segata *et al.*, 2012), the percentage of unassigned reads is  $\approx 9$  times higher than with *QIIME* (Caporaso *et al.*, 2010) (SRR072232: 6.4% with *EBI metagenomics* against 62.61% with ASaiM; SRR072233: 13% with *EBI metagenomics* against 53.93% with ASaiM). Nevertheless, taxonomic lineages from *EBI metagenomics* are limited to family level (Figure 8), while they go to species level with ASaiM (Figure 6). Hence, with *MetaPhlAn* (Truong *et al.*, 2015; Segata *et al.*, 2012), taxonomic assignations are more complete (until species level) and statistically supported (based on more sequences).



**Fig. 8.** Taxonomy for SRR072232 (left) and SRR072233 (right) from domains to families, found with *EBI metagenomics* pipeline. Circle diameters at each taxonomic levels are proportional to mapping-based relative abundance of corresponding taxon. Colors and family numbers are the same as the ones used in Figure 5. Gray circles and lines represent unexpected lineages.

With both *EBI metagenomics* and ASaiM, some observed taxonomic assignations are unexpected (Tables 4 and 5, Figures 6 and 8). For ASaiM, 3 species in each sample are identified as “unclassified” (Table 4). They are affiliated to the correct genus but not to correct species. Corresponding sequences may be then incompletely annotated and affiliated. The expected species (*Escherichia* unclassified, *Pseudomonas* unclassified, *Methanobrevibacter* unclassified, *Deinococcus* unclassified) are observed in datasets (Figure 6), but in lower



abundance than expected. If sequences corresponding to close unclassified species are correctly affiliated, these species would have observed relative abundances closer to mapping-based abundances. The taxonomic levels of these unexpected clades are higher (class, order and family) than taxonomic level of unexpected clades in ASaiM results (species, Table 6, Figure 8). Taxonomic assignments with *MetaPhlAN* (Truong *et al.*, 2015; Segata *et al.*, 2012) are then more accurate and precise.

Species	SRR072232	SRR072233
<i>Escherichia</i> unclassified	4.85%	0.8%
<i>Pseudomonas</i> unclassified	1.12%	0.56%
<i>Methanobrevibacter</i> unclassified	-	0.24%
<i>Deinococcus</i> unclassified	0.16%	-

**Table 4.** Relative abundances of unclassified species in ASaiM taxonomic results for both samples (SRR072232 and SRR072233)

Clade	Taxonomic level	SRR072232	SRR072233
Methanopyri	Class	0.09%	0.21%
Rickettsiales	Order	5.71%	1.43%
Methanopyrales	Order	0.09%	0.21%
Rickettsiales mitochondria	Family	5.71%	1.43%
Methanopyraceae	Family	0.09%	0.21%
Paraprevotellaceae	Family	-	0.09%
Cryptosporangiaceae	Family	-	0.5%

**Table 5.** Relative abundances of unexpected clades and their sub-clades in EBI metagenomics taxonomic results for both samples (SRR072232 and SRR072233)

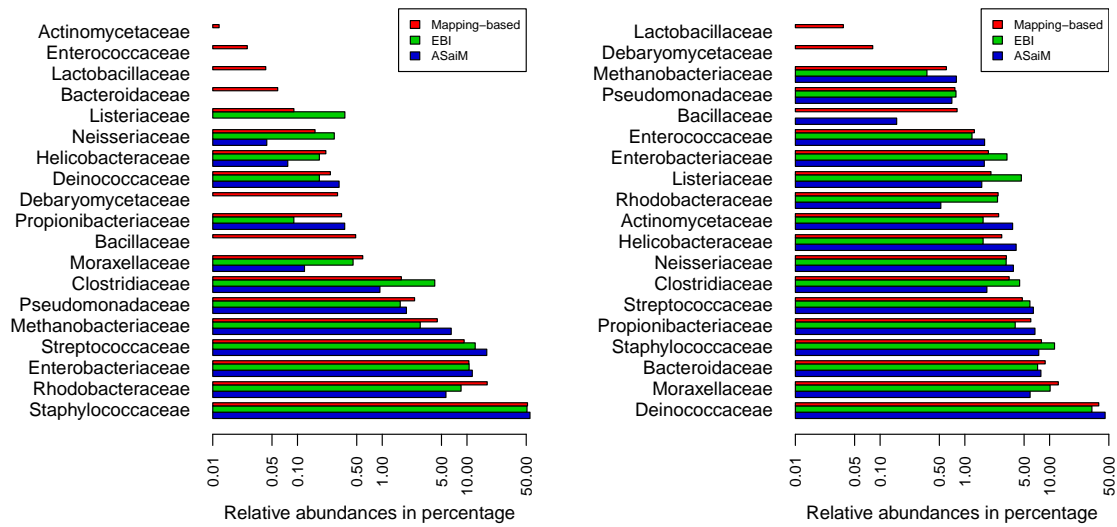
Taxonomic level	SRR072232		SRR072233	
	EBI	ASaiM	EBI	ASaiM
Domain	-	-	-	-
Kingdom	-	-	-	-
Phylum	-	-	-	-
Class	0.09%	-	0.21%	-
Order	5.71%	-	1.64%	-
Family	5.71%	-	2.23%	-
Genus	<i>No information</i>	-	<i>No information</i>	-
Species	<i>No information</i>	6.13%	<i>No information</i>	1.6%

**Table 6.** Relative abundances of unexpected clades at different taxonomic levels in taxonomic results of EBI metagenomics and ASaiM for both samples (SRR072232 and SRR072233)

Comparison of taxonomic results focus then on family level (Figure 9), the most precise taxomic level for *EBI metagenomics* (Figure 8).

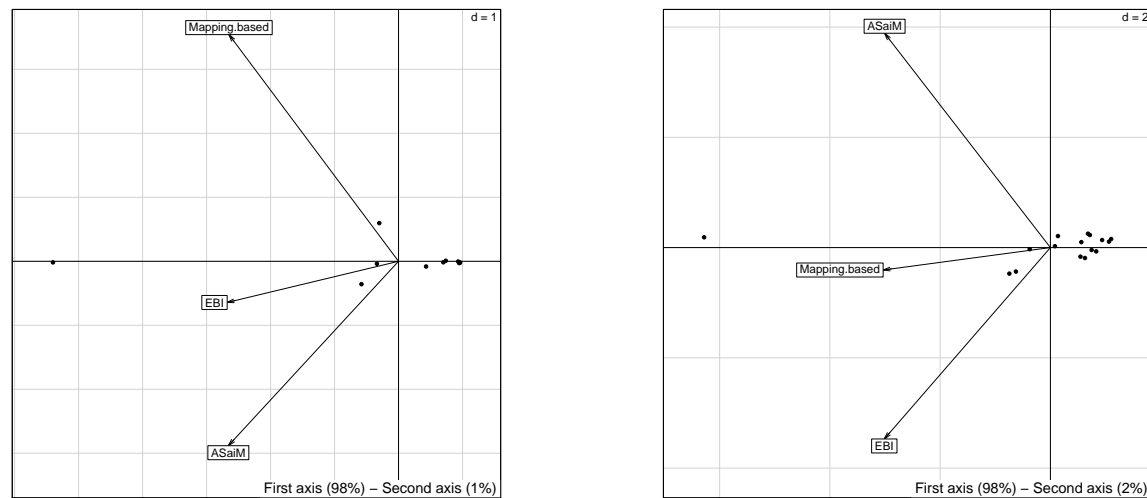
Similarly to previous observations on raw ASaiM results, species with mapping-based abundance smaller than 0.1% are found neither with ASaiM nor with *EBI metagenomics* (Figure 9). Nonetheless, the detection threshold seems slightly smaller for *EBI metagenomics*: for SRR072232, Listeriaceae family is detected with *EBI metagenomics* and not with ASaiM (Figure 9). On the other hand, Bacillaceae and Debaryomycetaceae families are not found with *EBI metagenomics* for both datasets (Figure 9), despite mapping-based abundance higher than 0.1%. Used databases may be then incomplete regarding some phylogenetic markers, particularly the ones corresponding to missing families.

Variations in observed abundances for *EBI metagenomics* or ASaiM correspond to variations in mapping-based abundances (Figure 7): small observed abundances for small mapping-based abundances and high observed abundances for high mapping-based abundances. For a broader comparison, a principal component analysis (PCA) is computed, for each sample, on observed families (for which abundance is not null in both *EBI metagenomics* and ASaiM results). First axis of these analyses explains most of data variability (98% for both



**Fig. 9.** Relative abundances of expected families for SRR072232 (left) and SRR072233 (right) with comparison between expected abundances (red thin bars), abundances obtained with EBI metagenomics (green wide bars) and abundances obtained with ASaiM (blue wide bars) and

datasets, Figure 10). Mapping-based, *EBI metagenomics* and ASaiM abundances are not discriminated on this first axis (Figure 10), only on the second one which explains less than 2% of overall data variability. Differences between mapping-based, *EBI metagenomics* and ASaiM abundances are then reduced. Hence, similar abundances for observed families are obtained for *EBI metagenomics* and ASaiM and these abundances are close to abundances computed using mapping on expected species genomes.



**Fig. 10.** Scatter diagram of principal component analysis of the relative abundances (in percentage) of families for SRR072232 (in left) and SRR072233 (in right). Only observed families in EBI metagenomics or ASaiM are used in these analyses.

ASaiM framework gives taxonomic results which are more accurate, complete (until species level) and statistically supported (based on more sequences) than *EBI metagenomics*. Moreover, community structure found with ASaiM framework is close to expected community structure of the mock datasets.

### 3.3 Functional analyses

#### 3.3.1 Raw ASaiM results

In ASaiM framework (Figure 2), *HUMAN2* (Abubucker *et al.*, 2012) is used for functional analyses. This tool profiles presence/absence and abundance of UniRef50 gene families and MetaCyc pathways from metagenomic/metatranscriptomic datasets. It then describes the metabolic profile of a microbial community.

*HUMAN2* generates three outputs: abundances of UniRef50 gene families, coverage and abundance of MetaCyc pathways. In both samples, > 90,000 UniRef50 gene families and > 480 MetaCyc pathways (Table 7) are reconstructed from > 1,100,000 non rDNA sequences (Table 3).

		UniRef50 gene families		MetaCyc pathways	
		SRR072232	SRR072233	SRR072232	SRR072233
All	Number	98,569	129,691	487	500
	Similar	44,933		475	
	% of similar inside all	45.59%	34.65%	97.54%	95%
	Relative abundance (%)	89.16%	50.67%	99.85%	99.53%
	<i>p</i> -value of Wilcoxon test on normalized relative abundance	1.31 · 10 <sup>-14</sup> (***)		0.24	

**Table 7.** Global information about UniRef50 gene families and MetaCyc pathways obtained with *HUMAN2* for both samples (SRR072233 and SRR072232). For each characteristics (gene families and pathways), several information is extracted: all number, number percentage and relative abundance (%) of similar characteristics and *p*-value of Wilcoxon test on relative abundance normalized by the sum of relative abundance for all similar characteristics.

The used mock datasets are constituted of metagenomic sequences from genomic mixture of identical 22 microbial strains (Table 1). Differences between datasets are on abundance of these strains (Table 1). Similar metabolic functions made by same species are then supposed to be found in both datasets, but with different abundances.

Differences of metabolic functions between both datasets are observed. Sets of gene families are different: 44,933 gene families are found in both samples (<46% for both samples, Table 7). But different gene families have a limited impact on overall metabolism (< 50% of relative abundance, Table 7). They may correspond to gene families which are difficult to detect because they are not abundant or they are “done” by organisms in low abundances. Global metabolism functions such as pathways are similar in both datasets (> 95% of similar pathways representing > 99.5% of overall abundance, Table 7). Hence, the unexpected observed differences are limited and may be due to bias induced by low abundances and detection threshold.

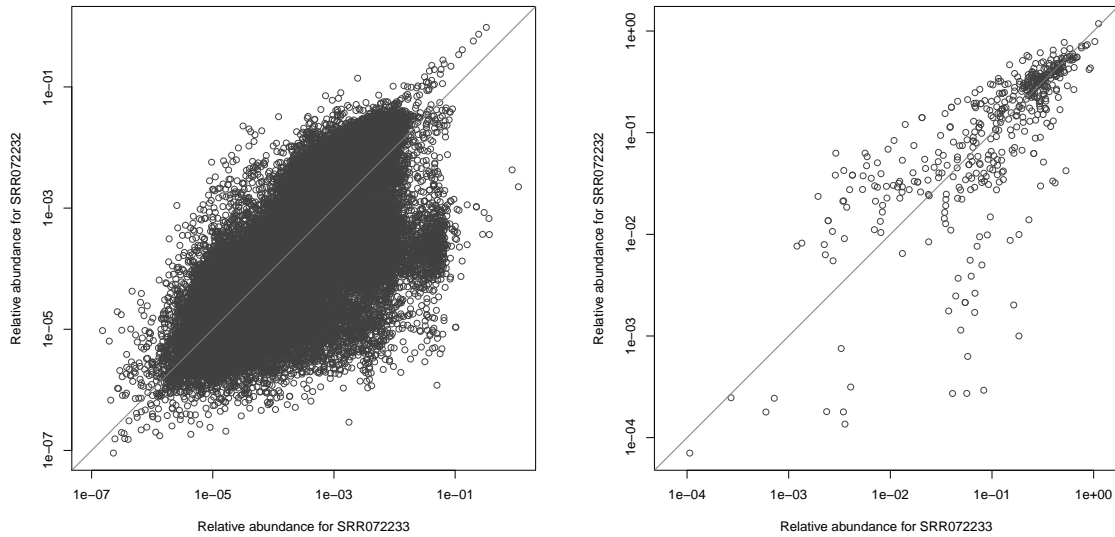
On the other hand, abundances of similar metabolic functions are different (Figure 11), as expected.

With more than 90,000 gene families and almost 500 pathways, the metabolic profile of studied microbial community is too large to get a broad overview. Each gene family and pathway is precise and related to specific metabolic functions. This information is interesting when you need detailed metabolic information and to go deeply inside metabolic profile. However, to get a broad overview of the metabolic processes, UniRef50 gene families and even MetaCyc pathways are too numerous and too precise. UniRef50 gene families and their abundances are then grouped into slim Gene Ontology terms (Figure 12). For both datasets, we observe similar profiles of GO slim terms (Figure 12).

Both communities, with same expected strains but in different abundances, have different metabolic profiles. As expected, the difference are not metabolic functions, but more on abundances of these functions.

#### 3.3.2 Comparison of *EBI metagenomics* and ASaiM results

In ASaiM workflow (Figure 2), UniRef50 gene families and their abundances are computed with *HUMAN2*. In *EBI metagenomics* pipeline (Figure 1), functional analyses are based on InterPro and its identifiers. These functional results are then not directly comparable. But, in both workflows, UniRef50 gene families and InterPro proteins are grouped into Gene Ontology slim terms to get a broad overview of functional profile of the community.



**Fig. 11.** Normalized relative abundances (%) for similar UniRef50 gene families (left graphics) and MetaCyc pathways (right graphics) for both samples (SRR072232 and SRR072233). The relative abundances of each similar characteristics (gene families or pathways) is computed with HUMAnN2 and normalized by the sum of relative abundance for all similar characteristics.

Barplot representations of GO slim term abundances for both samples and both workflows can be difficult to interpret (*e.g.* for the cellular component on Figure 13). Principal component analyses (PCA) are then computed on normalized relative abundance of GO slim term abundance inside each group to simplify visualization and interpretation (Figures 13 and 14).

Scatter representation of first plan (first two axes) of the PCA is similar for the three groups (Figures 13 and 14). First axis explains high proportion of data variability (between 64% and 87%, Table 8). On left part of scatter representation (Figures 13 and 14), GO slim terms are highly abundant with cellular processes related to membrane and cytoplasm (Figure 13), biosynthetic processes, nitrogen compound metabolic process, small molecular metabolic process, transport and DNA metabolic process for biological processes (Figure 14) and nucleotide binding for molecular functions (Figure 14). This first axis does not discriminate samples or workflows (Figures 13 and 14).

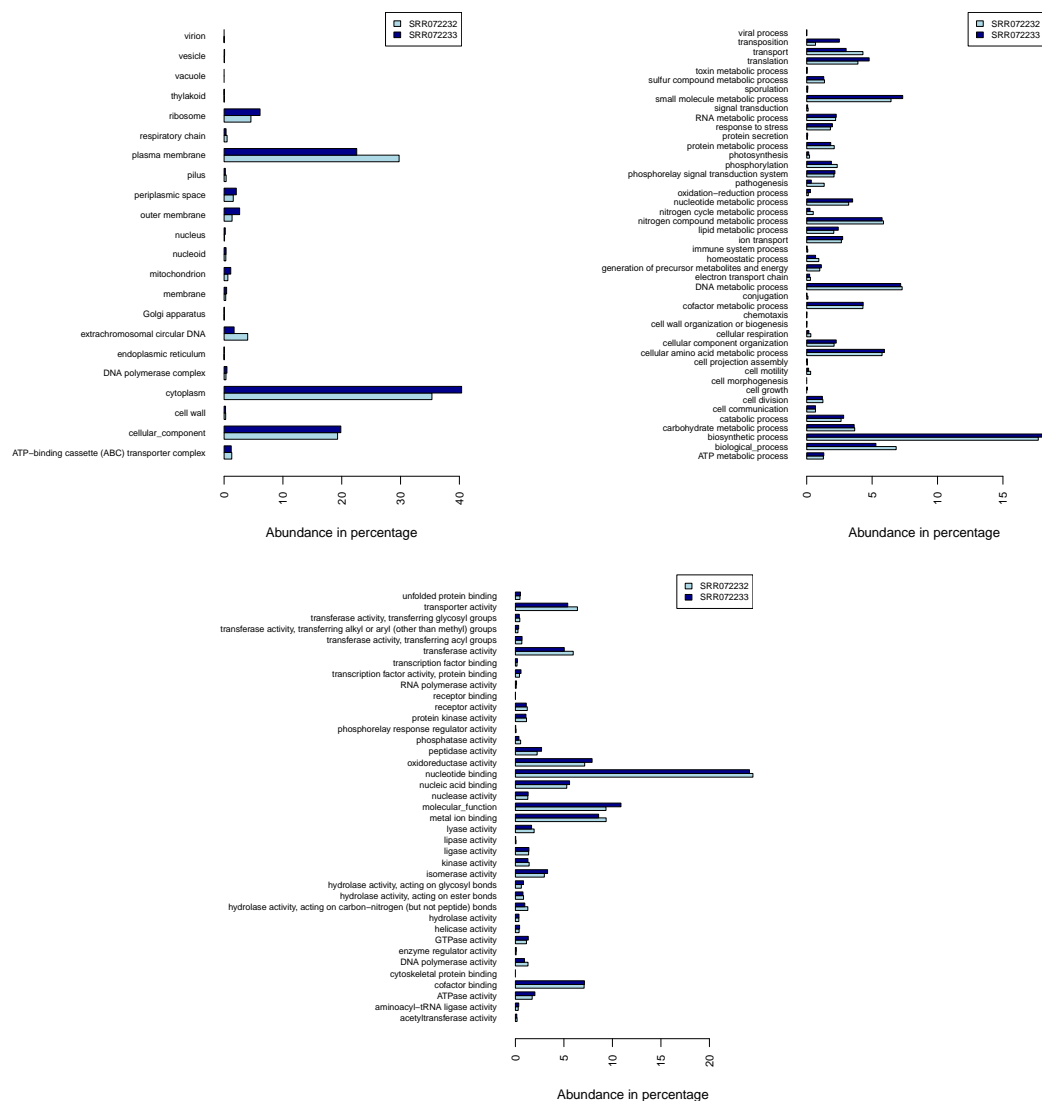
	Cellular components	Biological processes	Molecular functions
First axis	64%	87 %	85%
Second axis	35%	13 %	15%

**Table 8.** Explained variability by axes of Principal component analysis (PCA) for GO slim terms of cellular components, biological processes and molecular functions

The discrimination between *EBI metagenomics* and ASaiM results appears with second axis (Table 8), explaining between 13% and 35% of overall data variability (Table 8). Some GO slim terms such as membrane, hydrolase activity or nitrogen compound metabolic process are found in higher proportion in *EBI metagenomics* results than in ASaiM and some like biosynthetic process, plasma membrane or nucleotide binding in lower proportion (Figures 13 and 14).

None of the first two axes discriminates between samples. Variability between both samples seems then less important than variability between both workflows and mostly variability between GO slim terms.

Similar function results are obtained for *EBI metagenomics* and ASaiM workflows when we look at GO slim terms abundance: the discrimination between both workflow results appears only as a secondary explanation for variability in GO slim term abundances.

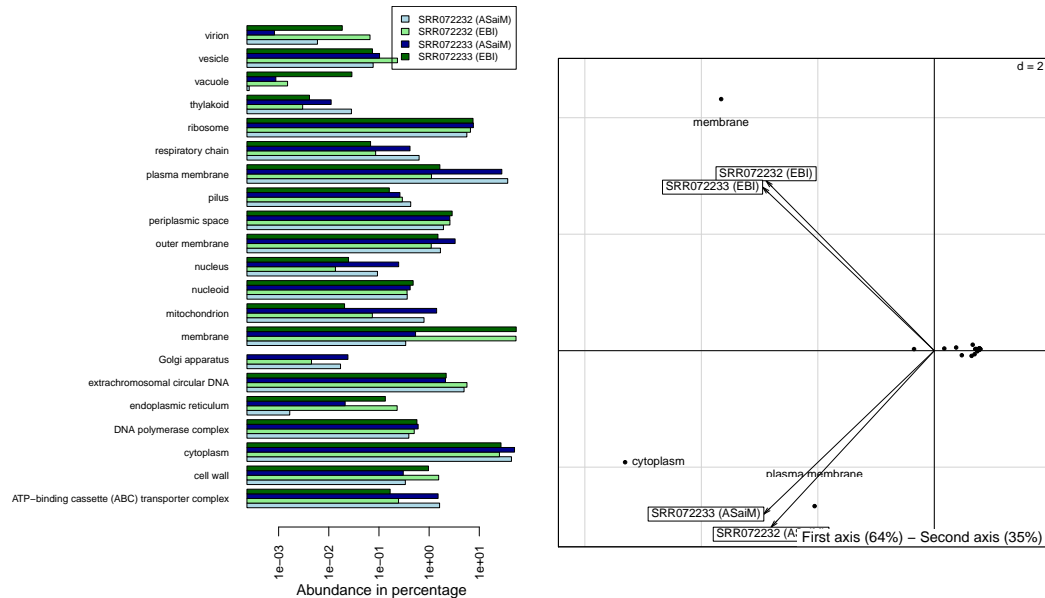


**Fig. 12.** Relative abundances of GO slim terms in SRR072232 and SRR072233 for cellular components (top left), biological processes (top right) and molecular function (bottom)

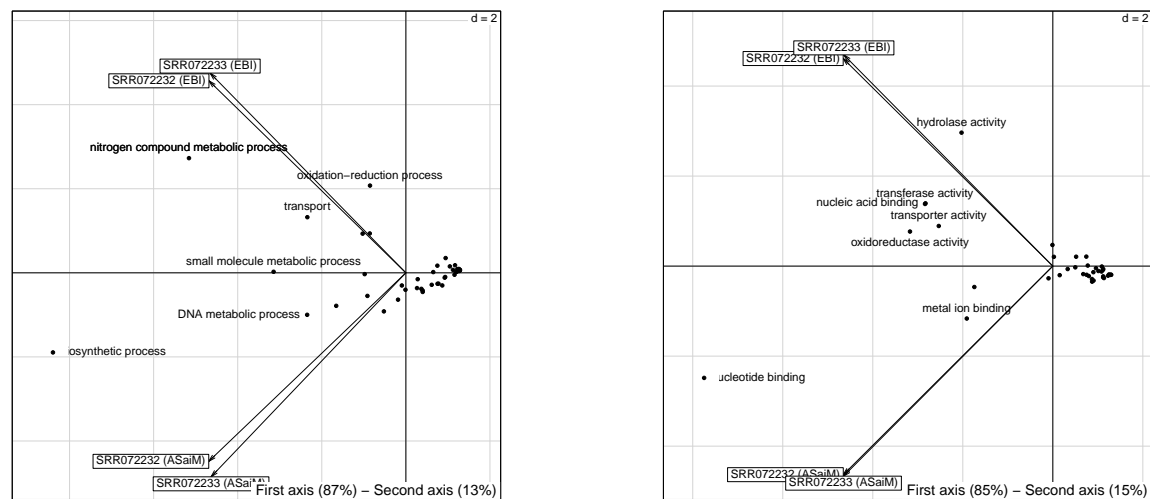
### 3.4 Taxonomically-related functional results

In *HUMAN2* results, abundances of gene families and pathways are stratified at the community level. We can then relate functional results to taxonomic results and answer questions such as “Which species contribute to which metabolic functions? And, in which proportion?”. < 35% of gene families (> 90% of relative abundance) and > 80% pathways (> 50% of relative abundance) can be then related to the community structure (species and their abundance, Table 9).

For both samples, a significant correlation is observed between CDS number in species (data from GenBank) and number of gene families found for these species (Table 10). The correlation, not so bad, is yet not perfect. Indeed, gene families have not a direct



**Fig. 13.** Barplot representation (in left, logarithm scale) and scatter diagram of principal component analysis of the normalized relative abundances (in percentage) of the cellular component GO slim terms for both samples (SRR072233 and SRR072233) and both workflows (EBI metagenomics and ASaiM). The relative abundances of each GO slim terms is normalized by the sum of relative abundance for the found cellular component GO slim terms in both samples and with both workflows.



**Fig. 14.** Scatter diagram of principal component analysis of the normalized relative abundances (in percentage) of the biological process (in left) and of the molecular functions (in right) GO slim terms for both samples (SRR072233 and SRR072233) and both workflows (EBI metagenomics and ASaiM). The relative abundances of each GO slim terms is normalized by the sum of relative abundance for the found biological process GO slim terms in both samples and with both workflows.

mapping to CDS (paralogs, duplications, ...) and rely on exhaustivity of the reference database (UniRef) used by HUMAnN2. So, it may be interesting to investigate the relation between gene families corresponding to found species in UniRef and gene families found

		UniRef50 gene families		MetaCyc pathways	
		SRR072232	SRR072233	SRR072232	SRR072233
Associated to a species	Number	26,219	41,005	402	400
	% of associated to a species inside all	26.60%	31.62%	82.56%	80%
	Relative abundance (%)	93.40%	90.24%	61.08%	51.52%
	Similar	19,815		363	
	% of similar inside associated to a species	68.02%	48.32%	90.30%	90.75%
	Relative abundance of similar inside	89.17%	44.75%	91.87%	42.70%
	associated to a species (%)				

**Table 9.** Global information about UniRef50 gene families and MetaCyc pathways obtained with HUMAnN2 for both samples (SRR072233 and SRR072232). For each characteristics (gene families and pathways), several information is extracted: all number, number percentage and relative abundance (%) of similar characteristics and p-value of Wilcoxon test on relative abundance normalized by the sum of relative abundance for all similar characteristics.

using HUMAnN2. This information is not available, but having a significant correlation between gene family number and CDS number is already great.

		UniRef50 gene families		MetaCyc pathways	
		SRR072232	SRR072233	SRR072232	SRR072233
Number					
Correlation with species CDS number	$r^2$	0.71	0.60		
	$p$ -value	$4.67 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$5.09 \cdot 10^{-3}$		
Mean abundance (Figure 15)					
Correlation with species abundance	$r^2$	0.95	0.98	0.90	0.93
	$p$ -value	$1.51 \cdot 10^{-7}$	$2.9 \cdot 10^{-13}$	$1.91 \cdot 10^{-7}$	$5.88 \cdot 10^{-12}$
Difference of mean abundance					
Correlation with species abundance difference	$r^2$	0.89		0.84	
	$p$ -value	$4.12 \cdot 10^{-7}$		$4.65 \cdot 10^{-6}$	

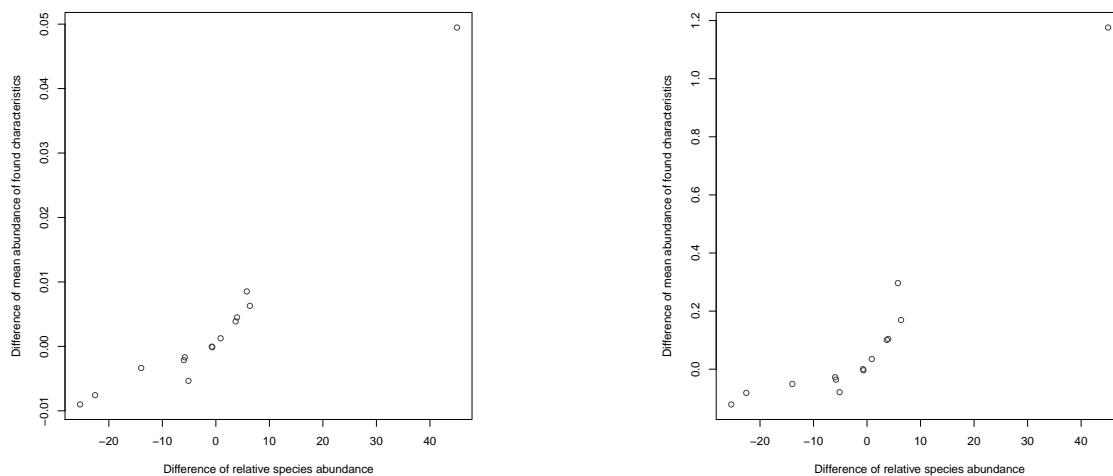
**Table 10.** Correlation coefficients and p-values (Pearson's test) for UniRef50 gene families and MetaCyc pathways obtained with HUMAnN2 for both samples (SRR072233 and SRR072232). CDS number for each strain has been extracted from GenBank given the links in Table 1

For both samples, relative abundances of gene families and pathways are highly correlated to observed relative abundance of involved species (Figure 15 and Table 10). Sequences of an abundant species in a community are supposed to be abundant in metagenomic sequences of the community. This relation holds for all sequences, particularly sequences corresponding to gene families. For pathways, the relation is more tricky: a pathway is identified if a high proportion of gene families involved in this pathway is found. And the abundance of a pathway is proportional to the number of complete “copies” of this pathway in the species. Then, a pathway is abundant if its parts are all found in numerous copies, leading to a tricky relation between species abundance and pathway abundance. But, the high correlations between species relative abundance and mean relative pathway abundance (Figure 15, Table 10) confirm good pathway reconstructions in our datasets, particularly for abundant species. To accentuate previous observations and conclusion, we also observe a strong and significant correlation between species abundance difference and difference of gene family and pathway mean abundance between both samples (Table 10).

Hence, our approach based on *MetaPhlAn2* and *HUMAnN2* gives accurate and relevant taxonomically-related functional results.

## 4 Conclusion

With ASaiM framework, raw sequences from a metagenomic dataset are fast analyzed (in few hours in a standard computer). Moreover, based on Galaxy, ASaiM framework possesses all Galaxy's strength: accessibility, reproducibility and also modularity. Numerous intermediary results can also be accessed during whole workflow execution.



**Fig. 15.** Difference in mean abundances for gene families (left) and pathways (right) in function of difference of related species abundance between both samples. Correlation coefficients and p-values are detailed in Table 10

Taxonomic analysis using *MetaPhlAn2* gives a great insight on community structure with complete, accurate and statistically supported information. With *HUMAnN2* and post-treatments on functional results, we get a broad overview of metabolic profile of studied microbial community. Furthermore, this metabolic profile is related to community structure to get information such as which species is involved in which metabolic function. This relation between function and taxonomy is really specific to ASaiM and not found in solutions like *EBI metagenomics*.

ASaiM framework based on Galaxy, numerous tools and workflows is a then powerful framework to analyze microbiota from shotgun raw sequence data.

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