

Pan-European imaging infrastructure gains momentum

Seven countries and EMBL join forces for Euro-BioImaging

Heidelberg, 20 February 2014 – Europe is uniting to make state-of-the-art imaging technologies accessible to biomedical researchers throughout the continent in a concerted manner. The European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) and seven countries (Belgium, Finland, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom) have signed the Euro-BioImaging Memorandum of Understanding. In the coming months, the signatories will work together towards the implementation and construction of this new pan-European infrastructure for imaging technologies. All European countries are invited to participate and several European nations are already set to follow suit.

Imaging plays a crucial role in next generation life science research and its translation into medical applications, but obtaining high-quality images requires advanced technology and expertise, and is very costly. By building an open research infrastructure for imaging technologies in Europe, Euro-BioImaging will enable biological and medical scientists to access the cutting-edge imaging equipment and specialist expertise needed for their research projects.

“This is a very important step for Euro-BioImaging. It marks the transition of the project into the hands of European countries and formalises their interest in making the Euro-BioImaging vision a reality,” says Jan Ellenberg from EMBL, who is Euro-BioImaging’s Scientific Coordinator for biological imaging. “It’s a success based on 3 years of thorough planning by the scientific community, which has delivered a strong and tested infrastructure model.”

The Memorandum is a first formal, albeit non-binding, step towards the implementation and construction of Euro-BioImaging. EMBL and the countries signing the Memorandum will be represented on the Interim Board: the strategic body for negotiating the final governance structure of Euro-BioImaging. Set to be established in March, the Board will work to define an international legal framework and agree on how Euro-BioImaging will be funded in the future.

As a pan-European infrastructure, Euro-BioImaging will be composed of imaging facilities, called Nodes, distributed throughout Europe. These facilities will open their doors to



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EMBL and seven European countries unite for Euro-BioImaging

- First formal step towards making Euro-BioImaging a reality
- Open access research infrastructure for imaging technologies in Europe
- Enabling cutting-edge research in life sciences for increased innovation potential in the European Research Area

all life science researchers, granting access to state-of-the-art imaging instruments. User access to the Nodes will be supported and coordinated by the Euro-BioImaging Hub, which will also provide image data services and coordinate technology training activities tailored to users’ needs.

Last year, 71 imaging centres from 19 countries expressed their interest in becoming Euro-BioImaging Nodes. Together, these potential Nodes could serve over 2000 research projects, and many proposed Nodes are already under construction, with an overall investment of over 200 million Euros across Europe. ●

Further information

www.eurobioimaging.eu

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About EMBL

The European Molecular Biology Laboratory is a basic research institute funded by public research monies from 20 member states (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) and associate member state Australia. Research at EMBL is conducted by approximately 85 independent groups covering the spectrum of molecular biology. The Laboratory has five units: the main Laboratory in Heidelberg, and Outstations in Hinxton (the European Bioinformatics Institute), Grenoble, Hamburg, and Monterotondo near Rome. The cornerstones of EMBL's mission are: to perform basic research in molecular biology; to train scientists, students and visitors at all levels; to offer vital services to scientists in the member states; to develop new instruments and methods in the life sciences and to actively engage in technology transfer activities. Around 190 students are enrolled in EMBL's International PhD programme. Additionally, the Laboratory offers a platform for dialogue with the general public through various science communication activities such as lecture series, visitor programmes and the dissemination of scientific achievements.

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