

# Euro-BioImaging 1<sup>st</sup> Open Call for Expressions of Interest

## *Evaluation procedure and Independent Evaluation Board*

### 1. Introduction

Euro-BioImaging is a pan-European infrastructure project whose mission is to build a distributed imaging infrastructure across Europe that will provide open access to innovative biological and medical imaging technologies for European researchers. The project is funded by the EU and currently the consortium is finalizing the basic principles for the operation of future Euro-BioImaging organisation. Euro-BioImaging will be governed by representatives of the European countries that will join Euro-BioImaging (Euro-BioImaging member states). The infrastructure established by Euro-BioImaging will consist of a set of geographically distributed but strongly interlinked imaging facilities (**Euro-BioImaging Nodes**), which will be selected among the leading European imaging facilities based on an independent evaluation process. This evaluation process will be performed by an Independent Evaluation Board. Euro-BioImaging is committed to an open and competitive Node selection mechanism for all ESFRI<sup>1</sup> countries and all imaging facilities.

From January to April 2013, Euro-BioImaging is inviting imaging facilities in all ESFRI countries for the first time to express their interest in joining the future Euro-BioImaging infrastructure by becoming Euro-BioImaging Nodes. **Imaging facilities will submit their Expression of Interest (EoI) before the end of April, which will be evaluated by the Independent Evaluation Board against the set of general and technology specific criteria in May and June.** Highly ranked evaluation will lead to the initiation of a series of negotiations between Euro-BioImaging, future Nodes, their host country government and funders, who should invest in the upgrade of the existing capacities and so enable the facilities to host external users. As one part of the EoI, applicants are therefore expected to document the initial communication with their funder(s) and to provide a budget plan for the upgrade and operation of the facility for the first 5 years.

**All submitted EoIs will be evaluated and ranked by the Independent Evaluation Board across all imaging technologies and European countries.**

*Please find more detailed information about the 1<sup>st</sup> Open Call attached to this email and published on the Euro-BioImaging website <http://www.eurobioimaging.eu/content-page/first-euro-bioimaging-open-call-nodes-general-information>.*

### 2. The Independent Evaluation Board (IEB) – Objective and composition

For the 1<sup>st</sup> Open Call, the External Advisory Board of the Euro-BioImaging Preparatory Phase Consortium is installing an **Independent Evaluation Board of international leading experts for imaging technologies and infrastructure.**

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<sup>1</sup> ESFRI, the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures, is a strategic instrument of the EU to develop the scientific integration of Europe and to strengthen its international outreach. The mission of ESFRI is to support a coherent and strategy-led approach to policy-making on research infrastructures in Europe, and to facilitate multilateral initiatives leading to the better use and development of research infrastructures, at EU and international level. 37 European countries are member of ESFRI.

The objective of the IEB is to:

- Evaluate and rank all submitted Node Expressions of Interest (EoIs) across all imaging technologies and European countries
- Highlight exceptionally good EoIs and
- thereby provide recommendations to the group of national funders and governments that will decide in which Euro-BioImaging Nodes to invest as part of the pan-European infrastructure.

#### *Timeline of evaluation procedure*



#### Composition of the IEB

To guarantee the independence of the IEB for the evaluation of all Expressions of Interest, all members of the IEB will be international non-European senior experts. Several European experts will be present as observers to answer questions the IEB may have on the European scientific infrastructure landscape during the final decision steps at the IEB meeting in New York. However, since every European imaging expert has a national and often institutional interest in the project, they will not have a voting right in the evaluation.

The IEB will comprise Imaging Technology Experts, Infrastructure Experts and Senior Users. The Members of the IEB had been first suggested by the Euro-BioImaging Steering Committee and Coordinating Persons of National Imaging Communities of 20 different European countries. The final list of IEB member nominations has been decided by the Euro-BioImaging External Advisory Board at their meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. The External Advisory Board will continuously look for and suggest additional candidates for the IEB in case the volume of incoming Expressions of Interests for Nodes will require additional members in certain areas of imaging technology. The External Advisory Board members were also invited to join the IEB, and Scott Fraser, Ian Smith, Rob Singer, and Hedvig Hricak have enthusiastically accepted this important role. Ron Kikinis unfortunately has taken on a part-time engagement in Europe and therefore cannot accept the invitation.

#### Structure of the IEB

The IEB will be structured into technology-specific panels, each comprising three experts ideally representing all three different expertise categories (Imaging Technology Experts, Infrastructure Experts and Senior Infrastructure Users). Thereby, each EoI will be evaluated by at least three independent experts. It is foreseen, that at least one panel per imaging technology is set up but the size and number of panels per technology may be adjusted depending on the volume of submitted Expressions of Interest for a given technology if needed.

Immediately after constitution, the IEB will elect its Chair and a Vice-Chair. The term of IEB Chair and Vice-Chair will be one year, with a possible extension by one additional term. The IEB will also provide a framework of operation for the future Euro-BioImaging Scientific Advisory Board, which will be installed by the Euro-BioImaging Member States together when the Euro-BioImaging legal and governance structure are adopted.

The role of IEB Chair and Vice-Chair will be to

- Nominate a panel chair for each technology-specific panel
- Nominate the panel members, together with the panel chairs
- Chair the meeting(s) of the IEB

- Facilitate the final decision making of the IEB and ensure the evaluations of different panels are harmonized.

The names of all IEB members will be published on the Euro-BioImaging website.

### 3. Evaluation procedure

After the deadline for submission of EoIs on 30 April 2013, the Euro-BioImaging project management will check all submitted EoI forms for formal completeness and eligibility (see the *General Criteria for Euro-BioImaging Nodes*<sup>2</sup> document listing eligibility criteria). EoIs with minor parts missing will be invited for completion within a short deadline. All eligible EoIs will be forwarded to the IEB Chair who will distribute them to the technology-specific panels (all administrative tasks will be supported by the Euro-BioImaging project management).

#### Principle of evaluation

Evaluation will be done based on the general and technology specific review criteria (see *General Criteria for Euro-BioImaging Nodes* and *Technology Specific Review Criteria for Advanced light Microscopy / Molecular Imaging/ Medical Imaging* published online<sup>3</sup>). Individual criteria will be listed in evaluation forms that will be used by IEB members when evaluating each EoI. The criteria for evaluation will be uniform across all imaging technologies and panels.

I) General Review Criteria will cover following topics:

- a. Scientific and technical excellence of the infrastructure Node
- b. Quality and scientific field of the academic environment
- c. Geographic coverage
- d. Maintenance and update
- e. European and national significance
- f. Access and service package
- g. Use and quality assurance
- h. User training
- i. If applicable, evidence of funding commitment by national funders

II) Technology Specific Review Criteria will cover topics as specified in Technology Specific Review Criteria documents<sup>3</sup>.

The individual criteria should be evaluated in the evaluation sheet (for example as “exceeds requirements” “fully meets requirements” “partially meets requirements” “does not meet requirements”). Evaluation sheets will be provided by Euro-BioImaging project management. This ranking will present the basis for the overall recommendation on the application.

Following evaluation of individual criteria, each evaluator proposes his **final ranking** using the following general categories

- Highly recommended EoI
- Recommended EoI
- EoI requires minor improvement
- EoI requires major improvement
- EoI not suitable

Each panel will jointly discuss the EoIs evaluated by them and agree on the uniform outcome. The panel chair will then present the result at the IEB meeting to all IEB members and the

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.eurobioimaging.eu/sites/default/files/General%20Criteria%20for%20Application%20for%20Euro-BioImaging%20Nodes%20Dec.%202012\(1\).pdf](http://www.eurobioimaging.eu/sites/default/files/General%20Criteria%20for%20Application%20for%20Euro-BioImaging%20Nodes%20Dec.%202012(1).pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.eurobioimaging.eu/content-page/required-documents-part-1st-call-euro-bioimaging-nodes>

**IEB Chair. Final decision on the ranking of all submitted EoIs and harmonization of EoI evaluations across technology domains and different European countries will be done by the whole IEB, facilitated by its Chair, during the physical meeting.**

### IEB Meeting

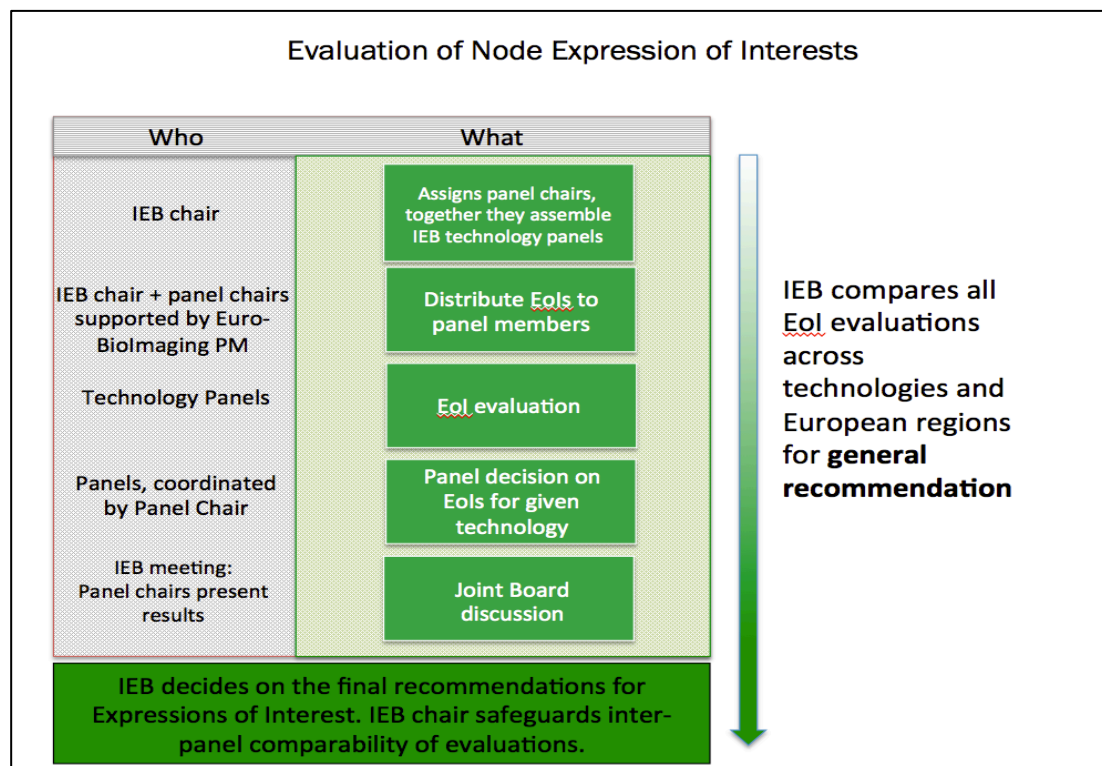
On June 15-16, 2013, a physical IEB meeting with all IEB members will take place in New York City. This shall be a two-day event (“lunch-to-early dinner” meeting), with a half-day scientific symposium on the first afternoon and the final evaluation and ranking of all EoIs across all panels on the second day. During the symposium, selected IEB members will present the recent developments and the most interesting science that is enabled by the progress of the imaging technology in their field.

The IEB will invite European senior consultants who know the European infrastructure landscape in depth for advice. Potential consultants to be invited are Eero Vuorio (Biocenter Finland), Roberto DiLauro (Università degli Studi di Napoli "Federico II" Italy), and Matthias Uhlen (Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden). In addition the Scientific Coordinators of Euro-BioImaging, Jan Ellenberg (EMBL) and Oliver Speck (University of Magdeburg) will be present as observers.

At the IEB meeting, each panel chair will present the results for that technology and the entire IEB will compare the recommendations of all panels and commonly decide on the final ranking of all EoIs across technologies and European regions and provide a general recommendation for the pan-European infrastructure. If more than one panel covered a specific technology, these panels will agree on their common ranking before the meeting of the whole IEB.

### **Transparency**

All IEB members have access to all EoIs. The list of names of IEB members will be published on the Euro-BioImaging webpage. Assignment of IEB members to applications remains confidential and the final recommendation is by the whole IEB.



### **Communication of Evaluation results**

The result of IEB evaluation is communicated to the applicant immediately after the review is concluded. With the applicant's explicit permission for each body, the result is also communicated to the responsible national funding organization and government, to the Euro-BioImaging Intergovernmental Working Group and to the Euro-BioImaging Steering Committee.