Euro-BioImaging ERIC:

Access Policy for Users

I. Considerations

1. Euro-BioImaging ERIC ("Euro-BioImaging") is a pan-European research infrastructure for innovative biological and biomedical imaging technologies which facilitates

- User access to Euro-BioImaging Nodes;
- Training for Users and facility staff;
- Image data services for the scientific community;

and provides related expertise and services essential for performing cutting-edge research.

2. Euro-BioImaging provides its services to life scientists working on the complete range from basic biological to medical research topics, in academia, health care and industry.

3. Euro-BioImaging's governance structure builds up on a Hub and Node model: The **Euro-BioImaging Hub** (the "Hub") is the supporting and coordinating entity that provides the virtual access entry point (Euro-BioImaging Web Portal) from which Users will be directed to their desired imaging technology as served by the respective **Euro-BioImaging Nodes** (the "Nodes"). In addition, the Hub coordinates dedicated image data management and training activities tailored to the needs of Users of the imaging infrastructure. Euro-BioImaging comprises of complementary and strongly interlinked, geographically distributed Nodes (specialised biological and biomedical imaging facilities) to grant access to scientists from all EU Member States and beyond.

4. Euro-BioImaging is set up as a European Research Infrastructure Consortium ("ERIC"), whose statutes have been published in the EU Official Journal on October 29, 2019.

5. According to the COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 723/2009 an ERIC needs to grant effective access, in accordance with the rules established in its Statutes, to the European research community, composed of researchers from Member States, associated countries and third countries. The basic principles need to be defined in an access policy.

6. According to Art. 6 of the Euro-BioImaging ERIC Statutes (Access Policy for Users) effective access to Euro-BioImaging ERIC services, including physical access to imaging technologies, training, image data services and expertise, shall be provided based on the scientific merit and technical feasibility of the proposed User research project.

7. The Access Policy for Users (the "Policy") further defines Art. 6 Euro-BioImaging ERIC Statutes and governs the principles for the access to all Euro-BioImaging services, taking into account the principles of the European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures[1]. Use and collection of data is subject to the relevant data privacy regulations, see also Euro-BioImaging ERIC Data Policy and ELSI Policy.

8. The Policy complements the Euro-BioImaging Ethical, Legal and Social Implications (ELSI) Policy.

II. Scope

The Policy provides principles to facilitate User access to imaging technologies at Nodes, training and image data services within the framework of Euro-BioImaging. It is applicable to the Hub and the Nodes' services, and any User, who is seeking access to Euro-BioImaging services. It does not supersede access policies and procedures applicable at the Nodes but provides a framework that the Nodes must adhere to for Euro-BioImaging User access.

III. Legal basis and conformity

According to Art. 10 (g)(i) of the COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 723/2009, the Statutes shall contain the basic principles covering the access policy for Users. Accordingly, Art. 6 of the Euro-BioImaging ERIC statutes requires Euro-BioImaging to establish an access policy for Users. The implementation of principles and proceedings in the Policy must be compliant with national and international law and agreements, particularly, but not only, in areas such as intellectual property rights and the protection of privacy, ethical considerations, as well as safety, security and public order regulations.

IV. Users

4.1 Open access to Services

Access to Euro-BioImaging services is open to all researchers, independent of their affiliation. The Euro-BioImaging Board can introduce and modify access criteria if regarded useful or necessary. Access starts with the first contact between a User and Euro-BioImaging as described in the clause 5.1.

4.2 Definition of User

A User is a scientist

- working in a biological, medical or related research field;

[1] European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures, published by Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, 2016

- at any stage of their career, including doctoral candidates, technical staff and students;
- applying for access to Euro-BioImaging services.

V. User Access – Principles

The User Support and Access to all Euro-BioImaging services by Hub and Nodes is based on the following principles:

5.1 Physical User access to imaging technologies at Euro-BioImaging Nodes

5.1.1 Access to imaging technologies at Nodes is open for all Users based on scientific excellence, technical feasability and service capacity at the Nodes.

5.1.2 Users are required to submit a formal application for access through the Euro-BioImaging Web Portal.

5.1.3 Applications are peer-reviewed by external scientific experts and technical feasibility of the proposed project is reviewed by Euro-BioImaging Nodes' staff (see Annex I for the User Access Procedure to imaging technologies at Nodes).

5.1.4 Nodes take the final decision on granting User access based on technical feasibility of the project and Node's capacity to provide expert support and instrument usage. The result of the evaluation including an explanation is communicated to the User by the Hub.

5.1.5 Users shall contact the Node before their visit, to jointly plan all preparatory steps and agree to framework conditions that allow the User access to the imaging technology. The framework conditions provided by the Node to the User should cover, at the least, details on access and fees, intellectual property rights, data protection, confidentiality, liability.

5.1.6 Euro-BioImaging Nodes are responsible to comply with national and international law and agreements (e.g. intellectual property rights, ethical considerations, safety, security, etc.)

5.1.7 Euro-BioImaging Nodes undertake the necessary actions, including instruction, to ensure the health, security and safety of any User accessing their Node, also to minimise the impact on the environment.

5.1.8 Access to Users from industry will be reviewed in a manner that ensures appropriate confidentiality and only assesses merit if needed for prioritization due to limited capacity for industry users.

5.2 Access to Euro-BioImaging training

5.2.1 Training is open for all Users based on capacity and training activity specific selection criteria.

5.2.2 Users submit an application for access through the Web Portal.

5.2.3. User applications are reviewed and selected by the organisers of Euro-BioImaging training.

5.3 Access to Euro-BioImaging image data services

Euro-BioImaging image data services are openly accessible.

VI. Euro-BioImaging Web Portal

Euro-BioImaging services are generally accessible to Users and published on the Euro-BioImaging Web Portal. It provides for example lists and descriptions of available Nodes, imaging technologies, training sites and courses, image data services, Nodes' equipment, User application guidelines, Nodes' contact details.

VII. Quality assurance

Euro-BioImaging continuously evaluates the quality of the access and its services through e.g. online feedback to ensure excellent services. This includes e.g. monitoring the output of the User access to the Nodes, training and data services.

VIII. Fees for User access

8.1 Legal basis for access fees

Rules and laws applicable at every Node and training site determine User access fees. In principle, User access fees are covered by Users.

8.2 Cost estimate

The Node or training site informs the User before the access about fees and applicable rules. The Node provides a first cost estimate after discussing the User's project with the User in sufficient detail.

8.3 Administration of fees

The Node or training site administers the User fees.

IX. Obligation by the Users

Users must comply with this Policy and the Euro-BioImaging access procedure as outlined in Annex I, as well as the legal framework applicable at Euro-BioImaging Nodes, training sites or data service providers, i.e.

Rules and regulations e.g. those relating to security, safety and environment

Procedures in particular concerning the notifications on introduction of material and instrumentation that could induce risks or ethical issues to the facility.

X. Intellectual Property

10.1 Ownership

The image data and metadata acquired during User access at a Euro-BioImaging Node belong to the User.

10.2 Data Privacy

The Data Privacy and security protection to individuals' personal information shall be applied when the personal information is processed and handled. Euro-BioImaging ERIC and Nodes have the adequate policies, proper organizational structure, processes and procedures to ensure the sufficient protection for the personal information.

XI. Acknowledgement and co-authorship

Users will acknowledge the contribution of Euro-BioImaging ERIC in any output (i.e. publication, patent, data, etc.) deriving from research conducted within the Euro-BioImaging Services. In accordance with good scientific practice, Users are encouraged to offer co-authorship to those working at the Research Infrastructure having made genuine scientific contributions to their work.

XII. Ethical conduct and research integrity

Euro-BioImaging ERIC, Nodes and Users undertake the necessary actions to adhere to Euro-BioImaging ERIC's ELSI Policy, which governs Euro-BioImaging ERIC's ethical behaviour in scientific research and research integrity. In particular, in granting access to Users Euro-BioImaging ERIC shall not discriminate on any personal grounds.

Annex I: User access procedure to Euro-BioImaging Nodes

All Euro-BioImaging ERIC Users will use the Euro-BioImaging Web Portal as their sole entry point for access. First, they will be required to submit a short formal application that describes the project to be carried out at the Euro-BioImaging ERIC infrastructure. The User is invited to contact the Euro-BioImaging Hub for support to identify the best technology and/or Node for their project. Euro-BioImaging also very strongly encourages Users to be in contact with the respective Node before submitting an application. The application will be subsequently evaluated: On the scientific level, the evaluation will be carried out by independent leading experts in the field (the scientific evaluation is administered by the Euro-BioImaging Hub), and on the technical level experts at the relevant Node(s) will assess the project's feasibility. The independent evaluation panel shall comprise European and international senior scientific experts, to assess incoming User applications for their scientific merit. The evaluation is based on the following criteria and conducted during two to three weeks after proposal submission:

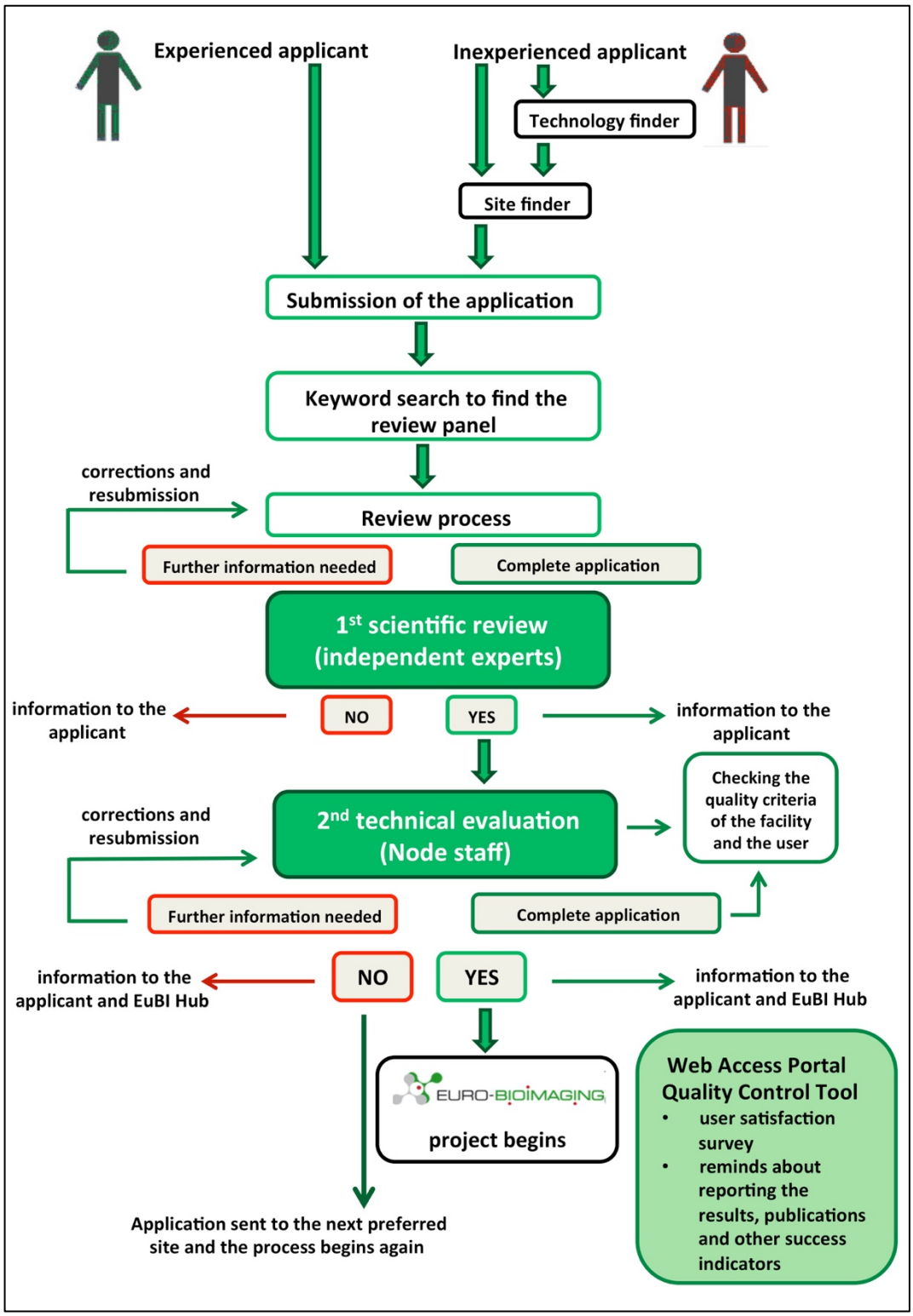
- Significance/importance of the project in the context of international research and standards in the field
- Relevance/contribution of the project to the scientist's overall scientific work/interests
- Progress beyond state-of-the-art
- Relevance of the project's results for inclusion in future scientific publications
- Scientific quality of the research and study concept
- Benefit for applicant (e.g. training received, results obtained, scientific networking started, being able to apply for his/her own grant)
- Impact of project on field of science, economy and society

In a second step, the technical feasibility is checked by the respective Euro-BioImaging Node, which decides if a User is granted access to this Node or not. The technical evaluation is based on these criteria:

- Feasibility of the project to be successfully conducted at the Euro-BioImaging Node
- Availability of required technologies and expertise at the Euro-BioImaging Node
- Availability of possible required supporting laboratory or animal facilities for the project
- Technical ability of the applicant to conduct the planned experiments, or the possibility to acquire the required skills in the time frame of the proposed project
- Reasonable estimation of project duration, and availability of the Euro-BioImaging Node during the proposed time frame
- Reasonable estimation of project costs and coverage by the scientist
- Necessity to conduct the research at the requested Euro-BioImaging Node (or could the applicant conduct the work at another Euro-BioImaging Node that would be closer to his/her home laboratory, or that would be more qualified for the specified application)

Finally, the Euro-BioImaging Hub will clearly communicate the evaluation results to Users and justify the decision taken on whether to grant access and in which form. Users will get access to the most suited Node, its technologies, services and expertise required for successful implementation of their project, regardless of where the Node and the User are located. Before their visit, the Users will contact the Node's staff, with the aim of jointly planning all preparatory steps needed before experiments on the Node's instruments can take place.

Euro-BioImaging staff will provide comprehensive support to Users before and during access. Prior to access, Users will receive information as needed about the Nodes' services and technologies, and advice by the Hub and Node staff for selecting the right Node, on the application procedure and practicalities, planned experiments as well as preparatory work that should be performed before visiting the Node. At the Node, Users will receive hands-on training, access to equipment and materials, expert support with data collection and quality control, guidance for transport of materials, health and safety regulations and help with accommodation arrangements. After the access, the User's satisfaction rate will be monitored through surveys, regular personal contact and following progress towards the possible publication of results.



Figures 1: Euro-BioImaging access procedure for granting User access