Memorandum of Understanding
between
EU-OPENSCREEN ERIC, Euro-BioImaging ERIC, Instruct ERIC
forming a Consortium on Molecular Life Science Infrastructure Services

1. Preamble

This document recognises the desire of the European Life Science (LS) Research Infrastructures (RIs) EU-OPENSCREEN ERIC, Euro-BioImaging ERIC, and Instruct ERIC – hereinafter referred to as "the parties" - to collaboratively support and enable the European life science community. The parties acknowledge the value and importance of their own unique fields of expertise being embedded in a larger scope of technologies and services offered by complementary ESFRI LS RIs across Europe. Working jointly together on the achievement of common goals will strengthen the impact of each individual RI and will contribute to the long-term sustainability of the parties.

Building on the successful collaboration between the parties, in particular the experience gained in the EC-funded projects BioMedBridges, CORBEL, RI-VIS, EOSC-Life as well as the ongoing RI services ISIDORe project, the parties want to continue and deepen their interaction. With this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), this group of LS RIs formalizes their collaboration on a sustainable basis in the

areas detailed below, and they form a Consortium for Molecular Life Science Infrastructure Services.

2. Goals and Objectives of Collaboration

Modern research is often interdisciplinary and asks for the combined use of technologies, resource collections and expertise, which are offered at individual RIs that have built up their unique and powerful expertise over years. Innovative and cutting-edge research projects will therefore benefit tremendously from a strong and reliable partnership and common service provision. Uniting efforts to maintain high-quality services, offer user and staff training and increase the visibility of RI services towards user communities and funders will contribute to the long-term sustainability of the parties. Recognizing the value and leading expertise of each other in their respective technological field, all parties strive to leverage their own individual strengths, networks, and communication channels for the benefit of all. Demonstrating their tight bonds and their strong willingness to collaborate will support their recognition and appreciation by relevant stakeholders in the new ERA.

3. Mechanism of Collaboration

This MoU reflects the intention of the parties to collectively collaborate and co-operate to achieve joint objectives related to enabling scientific communities in Europe and beyond such as, but not limited to, the following:

(1) Joint access for inter-RI research projects

1. Advising potential users about the service portfolio offered by the other parties to complement the technologies already applied in the user project. This implies that RI staff is knowledgeable about the other RIs' activities, expertise and technologies to be able to recognize opportunities beneficial to the scientific question. Staff should also refer users to each other, if the requested or most suitable technology is available in the other infrastructure
2. Providing support for projects interested in making the transition from one RI to the other by providing basic information, establishing the contact, supporting data transfer and participation in project team discussions
3. Striving for interoperability and compatibility of access procedures. This includes but is not limited to aspects as scientific and technical evaluation, privacy policies, confidentiality, user surveys, and access management software.

(2) Training

1. Share best practice in the areas of user access and user experience, training, data management, RI operation, RI management and stakeholder reporting, as relevant for RIs in the field of life sciences
2. Exchange (visits) of RI operational and managerial staff to gain insight into operational practises at the other RI and to benefit from evaluating the own performance against other RIs. Administrative support to facilitate these visits will be provided by all parties.
3. Organise joint training activities for users between two or all three RIs if it is useful in the scope of a particular scientific service.

(3) Outreach and Communication

1. Promotion of the RIs both collectively as well as individually at relevant events, such as conferences and workshops targeted to their own user community or participants with diverse background
2. Advertising items of particular interest to all three user communities (e.g. courses, open calls, job offers, funding opportunities) on the respective websites and thereby linking to each other.

(4) Speaking with "One Voice" towards governmental bodies and funders

1. Aligning messages and arguments towards common stakeholders such as funding agencies, the European Commission and national ministries on the relevance of continued support for ongoing operation of these RIs.

(5) Data Strategy

1. Representing the requirements of the consortium in aspects such as data storage, computing facilities and cloud infrastructure towards decision makers in the establishment of the EOSC
2. Striving for interoperability of cross-domain and cross-RI data resources, supporting linking of databases and harmonization of standards and ontologies

(6) Identifying funding resources

1. Developing a strategy for realizing funds for cross-RI work, aiming for long-term support for this consortium

4. Terms of Collaboration

This document can be modified, amended, expanded or reduced by mutual agreement between the parties or by the provision of six months written notice by either party. This document is not intended to create legal or binding obligations on either party. It serves only as a record of the parties' current intentions.

The collaboration described by this MoU is non-exclusive and each party is free to engage with and enter into strategic partnerships with other institutions or organisations.

Additional agreements may be developed between the parties that may commence as a result of this MoU.

This MoU is effective from the date of signing until 20 October 2027 unless terminated at an earlier date by mutual consent.

5. Conclusion

Signatures:

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Brno, 20 October 2022

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6. Annex

Description of the parties

EU-OPENSCREEN ERIC

The EU-OPENSCREEN ERIC (www.eu-openscreen.eu) is the European Research Infrastructure Consortium for Chemical Biology and early drug discovery. EU-OPENSCREEN integrates specialized and high-throughput screening and medicinal chemistry groups, which are located in 10 ERIC member countries (CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, LV, NO, PL, PT and SE), on a not-for-profit basis. In collaboration with these screening and medicinal chemistry groups, international researchers from academic institutions, SMEs and industrial organisations from around the world develop novel molecular tool compounds ('probes') for the validation of biological targets in their (patho)physiological context. They have access to the expertise and equipment of our screening and chemistry groups, and to the rationally selected EU-OPENSCREEN compound collection, currently comprising more than 100.000 compounds. EU-OPENSCREEN promotes further utilization of data by making its research findings available in its open-access database according to the FAIR data principles. The tool compounds which are being developed through EU-OPENSCREEN, are instrumental both for mechanistic studies in biological research and to identify novel 'druggable' biological targets and pathways. These can be translated into assets in pharmaceutical and agrosciences company pipelines, leading to new medicines and public health benefits.

Euro-BioImaging ERIC

Euro-BioImaging ERIC, the European Research Infrastructure for Imaging Technologies in Biological and Biomedical Sciences, provides open physical user access to state-of-the-art imaging technologies for life scientists. It offers image data support and training for infrastructure users and providers and continuously evaluates and includes new imaging technologies to ensure sustainable cutting-edge services. Euro-BioImaging ERIC consists of a set of complementary, strongly interlinked and geographically distributed Nodes − specialised imaging facilities − to reach European scientists in all Member States. The infrastructure is empowered by a strong supporting and coordinating entity, the Euro-BioImaging Hub. The Hub provides the virtual entry point from which users are directed to their desired imaging technology as served by the respective Euro-BioImaging Nodes. Since December 2019, Euro-BioImaging ERIC has opened its operation and provides open access to 33 Nodes in 14 countries and at EMBL, offering access to 50 different imaging technologies.

In practice, Euro-BioImaging ERIC provides: i) physical access to cutting-edge imaging technologies at the Nodes, including advanced probes, expertise and training, methods, software and analysis tools, and ii) virtual access to common image data services provided by the Hub such as software tools for image processing, common repositories for reference image data sets for sharing and re-use, academically owned cloud storage and compute services.

Instruct ERIC

Instruct-ERIC (www.instruct-eric.eu) is a European Research Infrastructure in Structural Biology comprising thirteen European member countries, and is a Landmark on the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) Roadmap. Structural Biology has an important part to play in life sciences research where X-ray, Cryo-EM and NMR methods have elucidated key protein structures to atomic level, now also providing contextual information on dynamic intracellular organisation. Instruct-ERIC provides Open Access to high end structural biology techniques across Europe. The online catalogue gives more information about services offered and how to submit a proposal for a research visit https://instruct-eric/platform-catalogue, with funded access available to researchers from all member countries and access for all other applicants on a pay for service basis. Instruct-ERIC also offers a programme of workshops in emerging technologies, along with internships and R&D funding for technology development.

The ERIC is a publicly funded, not-for-profit organisation that encourages new users to use cutting edge structural technologies that are part of a larger integrated approach that might also include the complementary services of other research infrastructures.