

## IMAGING 4 ALL: ADVANCING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO IMAGING GLOBALLY

In late autumn of 2025, Global BioImaging launched the first call of the i4A initiative, funded by the Wellcome Trust. This unique funding opportunity aims to provide equitable access to imaging technologies for LMIC researchers, enabling them to visit and benefit from state-of-the-art imaging facilities and expertise worldwide. By supporting image data acquisition, knowledge exchange, skill development, and international collaboration, i4A addresses the critical disparities in imaging access that impede scientific progress in under-resourced regions.

Imaging technologies have a profound impact on science and society, serving as essential tools for research, disease diagnostics, and healthcare. Their diverse applications - from visualizing single molecules to clinical samples - make them indispensable across scientific disciplines. However, a stark divide exists between developed economies with well-funded research infrastructure and Low/Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), where access to imaging resources remains limited.

The Imaging 4 All (i4A) initiative, funded by the Wellcome Trust and coordinated by Global BioImaging (GBI)\*, is actively working to address this divide by providing funding for researchers and imaging facility professionals from LMICs to access imaging technologies and expertise at host institutions worldwide.

### I4A at a Glance

As part of its core mission, i4A is dedicated to expanding access to cutting-edge imaging technologies and fostering a more inclusive global research community. The initiative facilitates knowledge exchange and skill development by funding visits to international host institutions. Researchers receive hands-on training in areas such as sample preparation, image acquisition, data processing, preliminary analysis, and facility management, and perform experiments

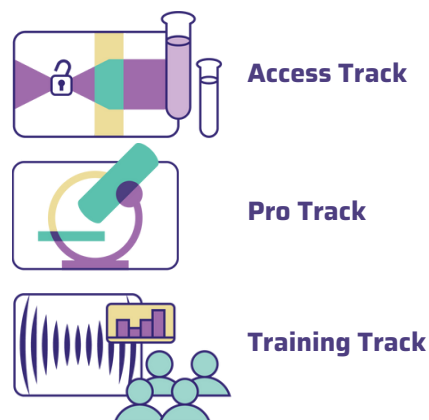
that drive their research forward.

By reducing financial barriers, i4A helps researchers overcome economic obstacles that often limit access to advanced imaging technologies and specialized training. Additionally, the program actively promotes global community engagement, integrating researchers from LMICs into the international imaging network, strengthening collaborations, and ensuring a more equitable scientific landscape.

### The First Call: Key Insights and Impact

During the first call, applicants could choose between three funding tracks, illustrated above :

- 1 Participation in national or international **in-person training workshops** or courses related to biological or biomedical imaging technologies or facility management.
- 2 **Access to imaging facilities and imaging labs** of the applicant's choice to use biological and biomedical imaging technologies and related services.
- 3 **Hands-on training for researchers** with significant expertise in imaging and imaging facility professionals.



i4A: Coordinated by Global BioImaging and funded by the Wellcome Trust.

\*hosted by the [European Molecular Biology Laboratory \(EMBL\)](#) in Heidelberg, Germany

The first funding call under the i4A initiative received an enthusiastic response, reflecting the demand for equitable imaging access.

**By the Numbers**

- **Total applications received: 83** (Access Track: 36, Training Track: 25, Pro Track: 22)
- **Total awards granted: 40** (Access Track: 15, Training Track: 16, Pro Track: 9)
- **Participation spread: 85%** of host institutions were located in Europe, highlighting both the strong support from European imaging centers and the need for increased participation from hosts worldwide.
- **Geographical Reach:** Successful applicants from 18 different countries traveled to 14 different host countries. The world map below illustrates the movement of successful applicants, showcasing the global impact of the initiative. Arrows highlight the flow of knowledge and skills across the globe.

**A Glimpse at the Vast Spread of Imaging**

The awarded projects represent a wide range of scientific research fields and imaging techniques - from single

molecule tracking of immunoreceptors to light sheet imaging of tissue regeneration-, demonstrating the broad applicability of the initiative.

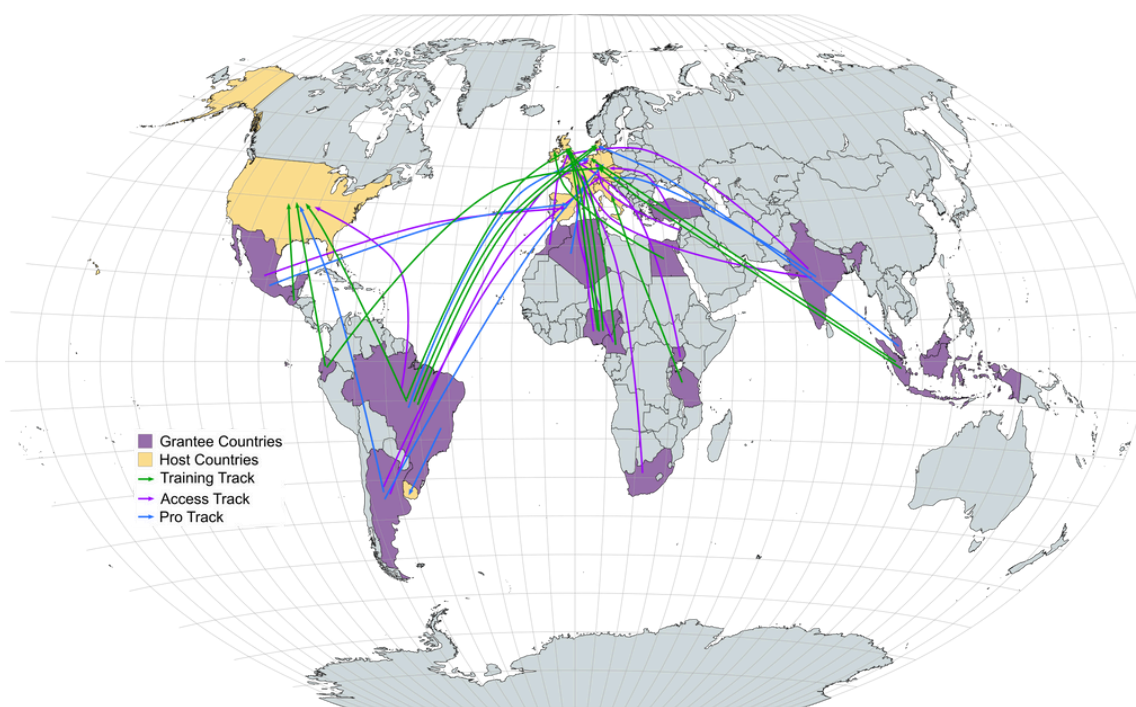
**Looking Ahead: Expanding Impact and Sustainability**

The success of the first call underscores the importance of continued investment in equitable imaging access. Moving forward, i4A aims to:

- Expand the network of host institutions to include more partners around the globe.
- Monitor long-term impact by assessing how knowledge transfer influences research output in applicants' home institutions in LMICs.

By fostering a globally inclusive imaging research ecosystem, Imaging 4 All is not just bridging technological gaps—it is empowering researchers, enhancing scientific innovation, and shaping a more equitable future in biological and biomedical imaging.

*This article was written by Sophie Winter from Global BioImaging.*



*Movement of i4A grantees around the world to access instrumentation and training. The worldmap was created with mapchart.net.*