

# Global Biolmaging Project

## D5.3 Report on sustainable strategy for future facility shadowing beyond the duration of Global Biolmaging Project

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<b>Task leader</b>	Silvio Aime (UNITO)
<b>Contributors</b>	Alessandra Viale (UNITO) Federica Paina (EMBL)



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### **Abstract**

The three rounds of international job shadowing for imaging facility staff organized by WP5 have been completed. The program had such a great success that the GBI partners have decided to continue it even beyond the duration of the GBI H2020 grant, extending it to other international partners as hosts and opening it to visiting imaging facility staff from the whole world. As some imaging facility staff who did not receive a travel grant already travelled at their own expenses during the previous rounds, it is expected that this will happen in the future too. Coordination of the program will be continued in kind on a voluntary basis by the Consortium members. Nevertheless, new funding opportunities are necessary in order to allow a greater number of people to travel and learn from other imaging facilities, promoting international exchanges and collaborations.

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## 1. The three rounds of job shadowing

The three rounds of international job shadowing for imaging facility staff organized by WP5 during the project have been very successful, with 46 applications received, 19 travel grants assigned, 22 people travelling around the globe and overall very positive feedbacks from both hosts and visitors. Based on the feedbacks received, the shadowing organizing team learned the support expected from the hosting facilities and was able to develop and improve coordination of the program, a final version of the guidelines (Annex 1), and some recommendations for hosts and guests to help them better organizing the visits (see D5.2).

## 2. Extension of the program

The great success of the first three rounds of international job shadowing was demonstrated by the positive (enthusiastic in many cases) feedbacks received from both hosts and guests, by the multiple suggestions for prolonging the stays, promoting two-ways exchanges, including other Countries, and by requests also coming from staff who did not belong to any of the involved partner infrastructures. Indeed, according to the GBI Grant Agreement, the job shadowing program was designed to include as host facilities only Euro-BioImaging, AMMRF, NIF, and India-BioImaging Nodes and to financially support only travel of staff and managers coming from Europe, India and Australia. However, already during project duration 3 people adhered to the program without having access to travel grants and found other sources to finance their shadowing visits (for more details see D5.2).

In addition, other international partners (e.g. Canada) showed their interest in participating in the program, volunteering their core facilities as hosts or setting up a similar staff exchange mechanism at the national level.

Therefore, in the framework of the discussions to ensure the sustainability of the Global BioImaging network beyond grant duration,<sup>1</sup> the Global BioImaging Consortium together with its international partners (Argentina, Australia, Canada, India, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, South Africa and the USA) decided to give continuity to the program, to open it to imaging facility staff from the whole world (not limited to Europe, Australia and India) and to extend it to hosts belonging to all partner infrastructures.

The extended job shadowing program will be launched at the beginning of 2019, with publication on the new Global BioImaging website ([www.globalbioimaging.org](http://www.globalbioimaging.org)), developed by WP1, of the latest version of the guidelines, the updated hosts list and the link to the application form.

The program will be publicized by all the involved partners by their usual communication channels (websites, social networks, newsletters etc).

The hosts list is currently being updated: WP5, together with WP6 for the relationship with the international partners, are contacting all facilities potentially interested to be involved in the program to ask for an expression of interest (see Annex 2). The facilities in Europe, Australia and

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<sup>1</sup> See also deliverable D2.4 " Sustainable plan for funding future activities of Global BioImaging including reciprocal use, training, virtual platforms for data handling"

India that were hosts during the GBI project have been contacted again and asked to renew their availability to participate in the program and to update the information about the offered job shadowing. More details have been requested, in order to facilitate potential interested visitors in choosing the hosts that better fit their needs and expectations.

More in detail, all the EuBI Node Candidates hosted by Countries that have already signed the formal request to become Euro-BioImaging ERIC founding members have been invited again to participate as hosts. Former EuBI hosts in Countries that did not commit yet to the ERIC will be temporarily removed from the list, but they have been informed that they can be included again, if interested, once their Countries formally request to enter the ERIC. In fact, the hosts list will be continuously updated and facilities will be able to send their expression of interest to become shadowing hosts at any moment.

In addition, new partner infrastructures in Argentina, Canada, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, South Africa and the USA have been invited to present facilities interested in becoming shadowing hosts and to provide their information in order to add them to the list.

Imaging facility staff who wish to visit one (or more) of the shadowing hosts will be able to apply at any moment via the on-line application form developed during the GBI project (minor changes have been made to the form to include all the current international partners). Formal application will serve the purpose of i) statistics collection and ii) visits coordination. However, since staff will have to travel at their own expenses, all the received applications will be forwarded to the requested hosts, without prior evaluation by external experts. Hosts have the faculty to reject applicants if the requests do not fit their offer/availability or for any other documented reasons.

In case in the future financial support for travel becomes newly available and travel grants can be assigned again, an application procedure for grants' allocation will be needed. In such a case the regular periodic open call system and the evaluation process used during GBI grant duration will be set up again.

The coordination of the program will be managed by UniTO and EMBL. Coordinators will keep a register of the number of applicants, selected hosts and periods of visits and will continue assisting hosts and guests in getting in touch and organizing the visits. Coordinators will also continue collecting feedbacks from both hosts and guests for further improving the program if necessary, to receive expressions of interest to become new hosts and update the hosts list consequently.

### **3. Financial resources**

A sustainable and long-term strategy for facility shadowing requires two types of financial resources: personnel costs for the program manager/coordinator's salary and funds to support the travel expenses of the facility staff taking part in the shadowing.

To launch and manage the extension of the program from December 2018 onwards, the University of Torino and EMBL have agreed to provide this service, first for a period of 1 year.

Regarding travel expenses, the discussions within the Global BioImaging international partners highlighted that in many cases funding for training activities and career development programs are embedded into the national systems. Since GBI's job shadowing is effectively a "train the trainer" program, aiming at improve the skills of imaging facility staff by international exposure to state-of-the-art imaging facilities worldwide, it is the opinion of the Global BioImaging partners that the

financial resources needed to cover travel expenses of staff taking part in the job shadowing can be found at the national level.

Nevertheless, the funding situation can vary from country to country and it is deemed important to find funds to allow staff coming from less resource-rich partners to travel internationally and take part into the program.

As described in deliverable D2.4, the Global BioImaging network has started the work leading to the preparation of a business plan. When ready, the plan will be presented to public and private funders worldwide for the collection of the resources to make this global network truly sustainable. In this plan resources to be dedicated to both the funding of the position of a training coordinator and to visitors travel grants will be advocated for.

**4. Annex 1: final version of general guidelines for an international job shadowing program for imaging facility staff.**



**General guidelines for an international shadowing program in imaging infrastructure facility management**

Job shadowing in imaging infrastructure facility management is a program where an imaging facility hosts a person coming from an international partner imaging facility to share with him/her experience and knowledge on a certain type of work related to the facility itself. This is accomplished by providing the guest with an experienced local worker who accompanies him/her while performing the job.

This allows facilities to establish or strengthen collaboration and to learn from each other on how to improve their efficiency in various aspects of their work functionality. This is of course very important for newly implemented facilities, but also the most established and experienced ones may find advantages in the exchange of best practices among the facilities staff.

The job shadowing can cover one or more of the following aspects related to management of imaging facilities:

- Aspects related to user access and open access provision (access modalities and procedures, offered services, management of ethical issues, practical issues, user access costs etc)
- Quality management and quality control (instruments maintenance and upgrades, costs, quality assessment)
- Software tools (development and/or usage of tools for image processing and analysis)
- Image data analysis, storage and management (general procedures, users' data storage and management)
- Facility general organization and management
- Latest technologies (hands-on training will be possible)

Although the shadowing activities are mainly aimed at exchanging best practices in management of imaging facilities, reciprocal exchange of information about research projects ongoing at the involved facilities may also take place to favor international scientific collaboration. This is at the host/guest discretion.

The general procedure to organize international shadowing sessions is as follows:

- 1) Imaging facilities belonging to the Global BioImaging consortium which are interested in the program as hosts can contact the program coordinators\* at any time;

- 2) A list of available hosting facilities, including details of what they plan to offer during the shadowing (number of accepted persons, types of shadowing, length of shadowing periods etc.) is published on the [www.globalbioimaging.org](http://www.globalbioimaging.org) website and kept up-to-date;
- 3) Imaging facility staff members interested in visiting one of the available hosting facilities apply by filling in an on-line form, where they are asked to indicate some personal professional information and what kind of expectations they have for the upcoming shadowing;
- 4) When travel grants are available, received applications are evaluated and scored by a panel of international external technical experts on the basis of the compliance between the position and CV of the candidate to the requested type of shadowing. The number of admitted people exchanges can vary depending on the hosts availability and on the travel funding opportunities: applicants are admitted to the program according to the score they have obtained from the reviewers. The excluded applicants (if any) may be contacted at a later time if resources become available.
- 5) If travel grants are not available, the visiting staff accepted by the hosting facility will travel at her/his own expenses.
- 6) Hosts have the faculty to reject applicants if they are deemed not suitable for the visit for reasonable grounds.
- 7) All shadowing applicants are supported by the shadowing program coordinator in contacting the preferred/suitable hosting facilities; subsequently the host and the visitor agree about all the practical issues related to the visit;
- 8) The visit takes place at the agreed time period;
- 9) Both the host and the visitor give their feedback on the shadowing after the visit is completed by filling-in on-line feedback forms.

Some points must be respected both by the host and by the visitor.

The guest should:

- Provide the host with an outline of what they are expecting from the shadowing prior to the shadowing taking place;
- Provide information of the background and expertise of the visiting staff so that shadowing can be structured in most productive manner. As a preliminary step, a short introduction of the guest to the hosting facility staff is encouraged to facilitate communication and exchange during the visit;
- Maintain confidentiality at all times during and after the visit; preliminary confidentiality agreements may be signed at the beginning of the job shadowing period (at host discretion).

The host should:

- Agree with the guest about the type of job shadowing that will take place and related modalities (timetables, access to laboratories/instruments etc.) prior to the visit;

- Assist the visitor in travel and lodging arrangements, if needed;
- Provide the visitors with information on the host facility at their arrival (infrastructure description, local rules, safety issues etc.);

Any other practical arrangement is at the host/guest discretion.

\*Coordinator contact: [alessandra.viale@unito.it](mailto:alessandra.viale@unito.it)



## Annex 2: Expression of Interest Form

### Expression of Interest to participate in the Global BiImaging extended job shadowing program as host / Update of current hosts information

*Job shadowing consists in sharing with a visitor from another facility experience and knowledge on a certain type of work related to the facility itself, and this is accomplished by providing him/her with an experienced local worker who accompanies him/her while performing the job.*

*The GBI job shadowing program is being extended beyond the end of the GBI grant and to other Countries in the world. This form is aimed at collecting or updating information about facilities in the Global BiImaging consortium interested in hosting some international imaging facility staff for a period of job shadowing. Please fill the form even if your facility is already included in the current list of available hosts, as we are updating the information and facilities that do not formally renew their availability as hosts will be deleted from the list by the end of November 2018 (end of GBI grant). Anyway, it will be possible to enter the program at any time in the future.*

*For any question regarding the program or the form please contact [alessandra.viale@unito.it](mailto:alessandra.viale@unito.it)*

Name of the hosting facility:

Address:

- Infrastructure:  Euro-BiImaging  
 National Imaging Facility Australia  
 AMMRF Australia  
 India BiImaging  
 Singapore Microscopy Infrastructure Network  
 BiImaging North America  
 Advanced BiImaging Support Japan  
 South Africa BiImaging  
 Canada BiImaging  
 National Laboratory for Advanced Microscopy Mexico  
 Other:

Website:

Imaging field(s):

- Biological Imaging  
 Biomedical imaging

Short description of your facility (labs, equipment etc.) and its activities (research, service provision etc.):

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Name(s) of the contact person(s) for the shadowing program: \_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail address(es): \_\_\_\_\_

Type(s) of work shadowing you plan to offer:

- aspects related to user access
- quality management
- software tools
- image data storage and analysis
- core facility management
- hands-on (please specify instruments):

\_\_\_\_\_

- Other:

\_\_\_\_\_

Preferred position of the person participating in the exchange:

- Manager
- Imaging specialist
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

For how long would you host the visitor(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

Specific expectations about the GBI job shadowing program (if any)?

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Will your guest(s) be able to attend any seminars, workshops or other training activities during the stay? If yes, please describe shortly.

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Do you have possibilities to support the visitor in finding affordable accommodation (existing guest house, special deal with hotels close by, etc)?

- Yes
- No