

UKRI and BiolmagingUK

**Expression of Interest (Eoi) for UK
Community Access Biological
Imaging Nodes for Euro-Biolmaging**



**BBSRC
and MRC**



Contents

Overview:	3
About the Existing UK Node:.....	4
Benefits of Joining the UK Node:	4
Guidance Notes:.....	5
Section Overview:	5
How we will assess your application:.....	5
Supporting Documents	6
Guidance for Letters of Support (LoS)	6
Guidance for Letters of Commitment (LoCs)	7
Deadlines & Contact Details	7
Section A: Institution & Facility Summary	8
A1: Applicant Details.....	8
A2. Document Checklist	8
Section B: Assessment Questions	9
B1. Scientific and Technical Excellence.....	9
B2. Added Value and Innovation Beyond Technical Excellence	11
B3. User Access and Management Capability.....	13
B4. Sustainability and Infrastructure Management.....	14
B5. Training and User Support Capabilities	16
B6. Community Engagement and Strategic Impact	17
Section C: Node Portfolio Information C1: Node Type	19
C2. Imaging Technologies and Data Science Capabilities	19
C2a. Imaging Technologies.....	19
C2b. Data Science Capabilities	19
C3. Fields of Excellence	19
C4. Additional Facilities	20
C5. Offered Instruments & Quality Assurance.....	20
C6. Instrument Capacity.....	22
Section D: Privacy Notice	23

Overview:

[Euro-BioImaging](#) (EuBI) is the European landmark research infrastructure for biological and biomedical imaging as recognised by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI), operating through a hub and spoke model across partner countries and institutions. Through EuBI, life scientists can access imaging instruments, expertise, training opportunities and data management services that they might not find at their home institutions or among their collaboration partners. EuBI was granted the legal status of an ERIC (European Research Infrastructure Consortium) on 29 Oct 2019, and EuBI became fully operational in December 2019, having operated in a limited interim capacity since May 2016.

The mission of EuBI encompasses two main aims:

- To provide access, services and training to state-of-the-art imaging technologies for all life scientists in Europe and beyond
- To foster the liaison and cooperation of all its stakeholders (including scientists, industry, national and European authorities)

The [UK Node of Euro-BioImaging](#) has been operational since 2022 as a pilot biological imaging Node. This year, BBSRC & MRC awarded long-term funding to the Node to enhance its activities, including expansion include more biological facilities (this application) and later in 2026, establishment of biomedical Node imaging sites in the UK.

This expansion of biological sites seeks applicants to join the existing seven sites providing community access within the UK, with successful applicants expected to dedicate at least 20% capacity in the proposed facility/instrument(s) for the wider EuBI community use - fostering collaborative opportunities both within the UK and between the UK and EuBI users.

Identification of new biological UK Nodes for EuBI is open to all UK-based imaging facilities who can offer the above capacity for use via EuBI.

Whilst no direct funding will be provided through this call, lead applicants should be eligible to receive UKRI funding and be associated with a UK Imaging facility (please see the [UKRI Grants Guide](#) for eligibility guidance). Applicants can either apply on behalf of a single facility, or a group of facilities offering a network that offers added value to the user over access to a single site.

We encourage applications from UK-based imaging facilities that can:

- Demonstrate technical and scientific excellence.
- Describe in detail how the facility will add value to users' research.
- Demonstrate sufficient capacity to allow additional access through EuBI collaboration.
- Show that named facilities and associated staff are sustainable and supported for at least the next 5 years

This call is administered by BioImagingUK, with support from UKRI-MRC and UKRI-BBSRC. For any queries, please contact BioImagingUK's Project Officer on Georgina@rms.org.uk

About the Existing UK Node:

The [UK Node of Euro-BiolImaging](#) is currently operational with seven complementary sites located across the UK:

- Edinburgh Super Resolution Imaging Centre (ESRIC) - Advanced super-resolution microscopy specialising in techniques beyond the diffraction limit
- Francis Crick Institute (London) - State-of-the-art biological optical volume imaging for imaging thick samples
- King's College London – Multi-scale correlative and multimodal microscopy capabilities
- OCTOPUS - Harwell Research Complex – Highly specialised imaging technologies and interdisciplinary expertise
- Oxford Brookes University - Including containment facilities and specialised organism support
- University of Liverpool – Integrated and advanced imaging technologies with broad biological expertise
- University of York – Including PALM/STORM/SIM technologies, spatial transcriptomics, and phase imaging

These sites collectively served almost 200 external users and produced 147 scientific publications in 2024 alone, demonstrating the significant impact and success of the UK Node model.

Benefits of Joining the UK Node:

Successful applicants will join this established network and gain access to:

International Recognition

- Facilities undergo a rigorous application and review process to become internationally renowned imaging facilities
- Association with Euro-BiolImaging's 41 Nodes comprising 247 facilities across 18 countries and EMBL

Access to Funding and Support

- The UK Node has received strategic funding from UKRI-BBSRC and UKRI-MRC to support professional development of core facility staff and provide user access funds
- EuBI supports Nodes in accessing national and EU-level infrastructure funding, promoting sustained growth and enhancing cutting-edge services

Enhanced Collaboration Opportunities

- Annual All-Hands meetings enable networking across Europe, promoting knowledge exchange and sharing of best practices
- Dedicated industry partnering events showcase capabilities and facilitate networking between academic facilities and commercial users
- Access to the broader Euro-BiolImaging community of over 500 core facility staff

Specialised Support Services

- A dedicated Data Steward provides training and guidance for depositing bioimaging data in appropriate repositories
- Upskilling of facility staff in FAIR data principles and open science practices
- Technical expertise sharing and collaborative problem-solving across the network

User Access Enhancement

- Integration into the Euro-BioImaging user access system, connecting your facility to researchers worldwide
- Professional support in user project evaluation and management
- Quality assurance frameworks and user satisfaction monitoring systems

Guidance Notes:

1. All sections are **mandatory**, please complete all sections as fully as possible.
2. **No financial information** is required, as funding will not be offered through this specific call.
3. Please use bullet points/tables as appropriate for readability.

Section Overview:

Section A	Institution & Facility Summary & Document Checklist
Section B	Alignment with assessment Criteria
Section C	Node Portfolio Information
Section D	Privacy Notice

Table 1 - Expression of Interest Form Sections

Section A asks for basic information regarding the institution & facility composition.

Section B addresses how your proposal would align with the assessment criteria. The assessment panel will wish to understand the **specialism** of the facility, be it in provision of highly specialised or high-end technologies, methodological or technical expertise, training, storage or interpretation and analysis of results.

Section C concerns portfolio information which will be informative to allow us to understand the make-up of the facilities supported.

How we will assess your application:

Applications will be assessed against the following 6 assessment areas (not listed in order of priority, equally weighted):

Assessment Area 1: Scientific and Technical Excellence

The demonstrable technical excellence of the facility or group of facilities, including evidence of world-class capabilities and scientific impact.

Assessment Area 2: Added Value and Innovation

The unique value and innovation that the facility provides to users' research beyond basic equipment access, including methodological expertise, advanced sample preparation, and data analysis support.

Assessment Area 3: User Access and Management Capability

The facility's capacity and capability to accept, support, and manage external users effectively, including clear access procedures and user journey planning.

Assessment Area 4: Sustainability and Infrastructure Management

The long-term sustainability of the facility, including maintenance strategies, quality control systems, and administrative arrangements for the next 5 years.

Assessment Area 5: Training and User Support

The facility's capability to provide high-quality training and ongoing user support, contributing to skill development in the UK imaging community.

Assessment Area 6: Community Engagement and Strategic Impact

The facility's commitment to engaging with the broader national and international imaging community, including alignment with UKRI strategic priorities and EuBI objectives.

The UK Node of EuBI is keen that a balanced portfolio which represents a spectrum of UK's capabilities in biological imaging form the basis of the proposed "Nodes". In the event that a number of similar applications are received, a portfolio approach will be taken to ensure there is a balanced selection of facilities that aligns with UK national requirements and those of [Euro-BioImaging](#). (EuBI) We advise candidate Nodes to evaluate EuBI's technology portfolio ([EuBI's new technologies](#)) and the wider [capabilities of EuBI](#) when considering the technology, skills, expertise, and resources of the proposed node.

Supporting Documents

Supporting documents must be included (see table in section A) in **PDF format**. For multi-institutional Nodes, supporting documents must be provided by all hosting institutions (in a single PDF file).

Guidance for Letters of Support (LoS)

Please ensure that all letters of support are on headed paper and that they are signed and dated **within 6 months** of the date of submission of the proposal. Only directly relevant letters of support should be submitted. **A maximum of 5 letters of support** combined from prospective and existing users (see table below) demonstrating community demand should be provided. Collaborative letters of support may be provided as necessary. All letters of support plus a tabulated summary should be collated and attached as a **single pdf**.

The UK Node expects letters of support aimed at demonstrating demand to explain clearly the impact and benefit of the proposed resource on the writer's research and the associated community and if possible, where this research has demonstrated scientific, economic or societal impact. Letters of support that fail to do so, particularly template letters indicating generic support without identifying a particular usage, are of negligible value for the assessment and should not be submitted. Carefully chosen letters containing relevant evidence of the requirement/ benefit to be gained, are of greater value than large numbers of letters.

Guidance for Letters of Commitment (LoCs)

Letters of Commitment must confirm the following from all facilities comprising the proposal:

- 1) The application is supported in full by all named facilities
- 2) Facilities are suitable to host users at the capacity stated within the application
- 3) The named facilities and associated staff are sustainable and supported for at least the next 5 years
- 4) All facilities understand there is no financial commitment from UKRI at this moment.

Deadlines & Contact Details

Please submit all required documents via email to Georgina@rms.org.uk **by 4pm on Tuesday 2nd December 2025.**

If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at Georgina@rms.org.uk

Section A: Institution & Facility Summary

A1: Applicant Details

INSTITUTE	
CONTACT POINT / ADMINISTRATIVE LEAD FOR NODE PROPOSAL (name, role and e-mail address)	
NAME OF EXISTING FACILITY (where applicable):	
ADDITIONAL INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED (if a multi-sited Node is proposed)	

A2. Document Checklist

Attachment ID.	Attachment Description	Included?
AT1	Letters of Support from Node Users for whom new or expanded capacity is planned ^{1,2}	
AT2	Letters of Support from Existing Users ^{1,2}	
AT3	Letter(s) from host institution(s) confirming capacity, open access capability, and sustainability at least until 2030 (Letter of Commitment) ^{1,3,4}	
AT4	List of up to 5 Publications, outputs, activities in support of excellence statements excellence and added value) ⁵	

¹ Multiple Letters of Intent (AT1, AT2, AT3) should be included as a single PDF wherever possible.

² AT1 and AT2 combined can total **no more than 5 letters**

³ Please ensure AT3 is signed by the legal representative of the applying institution and stamped accordingly

⁴ In the case of multi-sited Nodes, AT3 should be provided by **all hosting institutions**.

⁵ Please ensure research publications and outputs directly reference host institutions

Section B: Assessment Questions

B1. Scientific and Technical Excellence

Word limit: 1000

Demonstrate the scientific and technical excellence of your imaging facility and describe how it will contribute to world-class research.

What the assessors are looking for in your response:

Evidence that your facility demonstrates:

- Exceptional technical capabilities and scientific impact within your field(s) of expertise
- Access to state-of-the-art imaging technologies that meet the highest international standards
- A strong track record of supporting high-quality research outputs
- How your facility is unique or complementary to other existing UK and international imaging resources
- The types of cutting-edge research that will be enabled by your facility
- Evidence of technology development, innovation, or methodological advances
- Your facility's alignment with UKRI strategic priorities and emerging research needs

Include supporting evidence such as:

- Key publications, patents, or other research outputs directly enabled by your facility
- Examples of successful collaborations and user projects
- Recognition or awards for technical excellence
- Details of any novel or unique capabilities you offer

B2. Added Value and Innovation Beyond Technical Excellence

Word limit: 500

Describe the unique added value your facility provides to users and their research beyond access to advanced imaging equipment.

What the assessors are looking for in your response:

Clear explanation of how your facility adds value through:

- Advanced sample preparation techniques or specialised facilities
- Expert methodological support and consultation
- Innovative approaches to data analysis, interpretation, or management
- Access to complementary technologies or interdisciplinary expertise
- Software development, tool creation, or method validation services
- Industry connections or translation pathways

For multi-sited Node proposals:

- Specify the additional value this distributed model provides over a single-site approach
- Explain how sites complement each other and create synergies
- Describe how users benefit from the networked approach

Provide specific examples of how these value-added services have enhanced user research outcomes.

B3. User Access and Management Capability

Word limit: 700

Describe your facility's capacity and approach for accepting and managing external users through the Euro-Biolmaging network.

What the assessors are looking for in your response:

Detailed explanation of:

- Available capacity for external users (at least 20% of facility/instrument capacity is expected)
- Clear, accessible procedures for user applications and project evaluation
- User journey from initial contact through project completion
- Whether access is in-person, virtual, or hybrid, and what facilities support physical visits
- Data ownership model and any intellectual property arrangements
- Collaboration requirements or expectations
- Support provided to users during and after their visit
- How you will manage demand and prioritise access requests
- Quality assurance measures for user projects
- Mechanisms for user feedback and continuous improvement

Include information about:

- Existing external access arrangements and success stories
- Administrative systems already in place for user management

B4. Sustainability and Infrastructure Management

Word limit: 500

Demonstrate the long-term sustainability of your facility and describe your approach to maintaining cutting-edge capabilities.

What the assessors are looking for in your response:

Evidence of sustainability through:

- Realistic maintenance and upgrade plans for instrumentation
- Strategies for keeping technologies at the forefront of the field
- Quality control systems for instrumentation, services, and procedures
- Risk management and contingency planning
- Financial sustainability model beyond UKRI support
- Staffing plans and succession strategies
- Governance arrangements appropriate for the facility's complexity

Include details of:

- Current maintenance contracts and upgrade schedules
- Institutional investment commitments
- Revenue generation strategies (if applicable)
- Performance monitoring and quality assurance protocols
- How you will maintain internationally competitive capabilities

B5. Training and User Support Capabilities

Word limit: 500

Describe your facility's training capabilities and approach to developing user skills in imaging technologies.

What the assessors are looking for in your response:

Demonstration of training excellence through:

- Track record of training delivery (number and types of courses, participant numbers over last 3 years)
- Range of training formats (hands-on workshops, online courses, one-on-one mentoring)
- Expertise of training staff and their qualifications
- Training infrastructure and resources available
- Assessment and certification approaches
- Ongoing user support beyond initial training

Future training plans:

- Planned training events and courses for the next 2 years
- Innovation in training delivery methods
- Contribution to national skill development in biological imaging
- Integration with EuBI training initiatives
- Support for different career stages (students, postdocs, established researchers, technical staff)

Include specific examples of successful training programs and their impact on the user community.

B6. Community Engagement and Strategic Impact

Word limit: 500

Explain how your facility will engage with the broader imaging community and contribute to UK and European strategic objectives.

What the assessors are looking for in your response:

Plans for community engagement including:

- Active participation in national imaging networks and initiatives
- Contribution to BioImagingUK and Euro-BioImaging objectives
- Engagement with industrial partners and translation activities
- Public engagement and outreach activities
- International collaboration and knowledge exchange
- Contribution to policy development and strategic planning

Strategic impact through:

- Alignment with UKRI strategies
- Contribution to addressing societal challenges
- Economic impact and innovation potential
- Building UK capacity and capabilities in biological imaging
- Enhancing UK's position in the international imaging landscape

Administration and coordination:

- Single point of contact arrangements
- Communication strategies for different stakeholder groups

- Plans for regular community consultation and feedback
- Contribution to broader imaging infrastructure planning

Provide specific examples of current engagement activities and future commitments.

Section C: Node Portfolio Information

C1: Node Type

Please tick/complete as appropriate:

	Single Site (Will provide the complete service package in a single location)	Multiple sites (Service package distributed across multiple sites)
Single Technology Flagship Node		
Multimodal Technology Node		

C2. Imaging Technologies and Data Science Capabilities

C2a. Imaging Technologies

Please select Keywords that match your facility. If your facility is multi-modal technology, please select all that apply. For “other” technologies, please write in the text box provided.

Biological Imaging:

Correlative Light Electron Microscopy	
Functional Imaging, In Vivo Optical Imaging	
High Throughput/Content Microscopy	
Mesoscopic Imaging	
Multi-modal Advanced Light Microscopy	
Super-resolution Microscopy	
Other	

C2b. Data Science Capabilities

Imaging Data Types Supported	
Electron Microscopy	
Light Microscopy	
All Data Types	

C3. Fields of Excellence

Please select any of the below scientific fields in which you consider your facility has a track record of technical excellence.

Cardiovascular disease	
Cell Biology	
Developmental Biology	
Metabolism	

Microbiology	
Neurobiology	
Oncology	
Physiology	
Plant Biology	
Preclinical/Animal Research	
Structural Biology	
Other	

C4. Additional Facilities

Please select any additional facilities / capabilities that apply to the proposed Node below.

Containment Level 3 Lab	
Tissue Culture	
Data Analysis	
Computing Resources	
Software Expertise	

C5. Offered Instruments & Quality Assurance

Please summarise/list the technologies (make/model of instrument) that you are intending to offer. Further information regarding how the facility manages quality assurance (QA) (covering maintenance of instrumentation, services, and procedures) should be included in the field below (max 250 words).

Instrument Type	Manufacturer	Pre-existing QA processes?

C6. Instrument Capacity

Please specify the technical and staff capacity the proposed Node can provide, focusing on up to five core technologies of the Node. Please refer back to section C2 for Instrument Types, and provide capacity values in User Hours per Calendar Year unless otherwise stated.

Instrument Type	Data Requested	Answer
	Number of Current Internal Users	
	Number of Current External Users	
	Total Instrument Capacity	
	Spare Instrument Capacity	
	Spare Technical Staff Capacity	
	Number of Current Internal Users	
	Number of Current External Users	
	Total Instrument Capacity	
	Spare Instrument Capacity	
	Spare Technical Staff Capacity	
	Number of Current Internal Users	
	Number of Current External Users	
	Total Instrument Capacity	
	Spare Instrument Capacity	
	Spare Technical Staff Capacity	
	Number of Current Internal Users	
	Number of Current External Users	
	Total Instrument Capacity	
	Spare Instrument Capacity	
	Spare Technical Staff Capacity	
	Number of Current Internal Users	
	Number of Current External Users	
	Total Instrument Capacity	
	Spare Instrument Capacity	
	Spare Technical Staff Capacity	

Section D: Privacy Notice

BiolmagingUK and the Royal Microscopical Society (RMS) carries out the processing of personal data in accordance with the [Data Protection Act 2018](#) (functionally equivalent implementation of EU's [General Data Protection Regulation](#) (GDPR) in UK Law).

The information that you provide as part of this application process will only be used by UKRI-BBSRC, UKRI-MRC, BiolmagingUK and the RMS for the purposes of assessing your application and informing our understanding of the current portfolio. Your contact details will be used to inform you of updates to the process and as a record of your participation in the process for audit purposes.

If you do not agree to your data being used to this effect, or wish to exercise your rights including access, rectification, deletion, or objection to processing, please contact us at info@rms.org.uk.

Information gathered will be used alongside data gathered through other exercises, to provide a dialogue that facilitates strategy development. The personal data provided will be retained on our systems for as long as is required to carry out processing for the purposes outlined above. By providing your information you are consenting to its use as detailed above. You can access a copy of the RMS Privacy Policy [here](#).