



ESBB Business Plan

Table of Contents

	Page
A. Executive Summary	2
B. Introduction	2
C. Analysis of the Biobanking Environment	3
D. ESBB Role & Objectives	8
1. Unique Selling Proposal	
2. Vision & Mission	
3. Values & Ethics	
4. Goals & Strategies	
5. Action plan	
E. ESBB Governance	12
F. Financial Planning	13
G. Membership Benefits	15
1. Key membership benefits	
2. Membership benefit packages	
3. Ensuring benefits for the five key groups in biobanking	
4. Future membership benefits	
5. Return on investment for grant funding agencies and other sponsors	
H. Appendices	19
1. Operating Procedures.	

A. Executive Summary

The mission of the European, the Middle-Eastern and African Society for Biopreservation and Biobanking (ESBB) is to advance the field of biobanking in support of research relating to healthcare, agriculture and the environment. Through annual conferences and other activities, ESBB will provide a platform for dissemination of knowledge and discussion of issues, working groups for problem solving and a single strong voice for the biobanking community. No other biobanking society serves the specific needs of biobankers in the EMEA region.

Members of the society will include all the main actors in biobanking activity, including biobankers (managers and staff), vendors (who provide the equipment, software and consumables they require), sample donors and providers (ie. patients and clinicians), sample users (ie. researchers) and special experts in biobanking-related topics (eg. lawyers, ethicists, informaticians). The two largest subgroups are likely to be the biobankers and vendors. The synergistic interaction between biobankers and vendors will be a key feature of this dynamic society and the resulting information exchange will lead to improvements in the technology for biobank management. A second key feature of the society will be its working groups which will direct their attention to specific problems in the biobanking field and will strive to find solutions and to publish recommendations. A third key feature of ESBB will be its continuing efforts to introduce and involve essential stakeholder groups in its activities. For this reason, the representatives of patient groups and the representatives of pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies will be actively involved in ESBB's annual conferences.

ESBB plans to join ISBER as a chapter so that it becomes part of a global organisation. It plans to support and collaborate with BBMRI and other organisations related to biobanking. It also plans to adopt Biopreservation and Biobanking as its official journal. The society's long-term goal is to make biobanking practice more professional, and to introduce staff training and certification programmes as well as accreditation programmes for biobanks.

Regularly updated information about ESBB can be seen on its website: <http://www.esbb.org/>

B. Introduction

Biobanking was listed as one of the 10 ideas that will change the world in Time Magazine (2009). The reason that such an apparently simple idea could change the world lies in the technological advances that are shaping biology and medicine: advances in molecular technology, information technology and robotics. These advances have made "high throughput" molecular analysis of biological samples a reality. However, in order for such analysis to provide meaningful data, the numerous samples "put through" the analysis must be high quality, collected in a standardised manner and must be accurately annotated. This is where biobanking comes into the picture.

Biobanking is important in all areas of biology and medicine, ranging from studies on the environment and biodiversity, through to agricultural, veterinary and medical studies. One factor that is driving the

development of biobanking particularly fast is the growing interest in personalised medical care. High throughput molecular analysis has the potential to identify exactly the right drug for the individual patient, with maximum efficacy and minimum side effects. First however, research has to be done to identify biomarkers that will allow identification of the right drug. Regulatory agencies like the FDA and EMEA have recognised the importance of biomarkers in drug development, so now pharmaceutical companies are being required to use biomarkers to streamline the drug development process. Biomarker testing is now a requirement for some drugs in clinical use. Since biomarker research is a high priority for pharmaceutical R&D, so too are professionally-run biobanks.

Biobanks cannot exist in isolation: they must collaborate and form networks to meet the sample requirements of many research projects. Research studies often require more samples of a specific type, than any one biobank can provide. Genome-wide association studies are one very good example, but the same applies for any international collaboration where samples will be shared. Over the past 5 years, there has been rapid development of biobank networks, particularly in Europe with the BBMRI initiative which kicked-off at a meeting in Hinxton, Cambridge in February 2008. This initiative covers all human biobanks (population and disease-based).

A major challenge for such networks is that biobanks must agree on standard operating procedures and best practices in order to ensure that the samples exchanged can produce comparable and repeatable results. There is a need for biospecimen research to identify evidence-based standards and standard operating procedures in biobanking, since evidence justifies the standard and ensures widespread adoption. There are also many best practice policies on which consensus is still required. In addition there are many ethical, social and legal issues to be resolved. Furthermore, there is a requirement for training and certification of staff and accreditation of biobanks. In short, the biobanking field needs to become more professional and this needs to be achieved as soon as possible.

C. Analysis of the Biobanking Environment

1. ISBER

The International Society for Biological and Environmental Repositories (ISBER) is an international society for people interested in the biobanking of human and non-human biological materials. The website is: <http://www.isber.org/>. ISBER was formed 11 years ago by members of the US National Institutes of Health and Centers for Disease Control and it is based in Bethesda, Maryland. ISBER is the largest biobanking society in the world and now has over 1000 members with representation from all around the globe. It is a very active society with many committees and working groups which remain in continuous contact by email and audioconferencing and which work to improve the society and advance the biobanking field. The society is well known for the ISBER Best Practices for Biorepositories document and its official journal is Biopreservation and Biobanking. Each year it holds an annual general meeting which include a variety of carefully planned activities to encourage

communication and networking: there are lectures, workshops, exhibitor booths, posters, roundtable lunches, social events, committee meetings and a business meeting. Over the last 10 years these annual general meetings have grown in size and there has been continuous improvement in their quality. Many would agree that over the years it has become an excellent society. From its US origins, the society has made significant efforts to become global in character and to this end it has held 2 annual meetings in Europe and 1 in Asia.

Despite these efforts, the one problem with ISBER for members based outside North America is that the society has a predominantly US focus. This is inevitable, because the membership has remained predominantly North American. To serve the ISBER membership appropriately, the society must therefore hold most of its meetings in the USA. Membership services, discussions and initiatives will inevitably continue to be mainly USA-oriented.

In 2004, ISBER held an annual meeting in Perugia, Italy, hosted by Pasquale De Blasio. From this time, there was considerable interest in developing a European subdivision or chapter of ISBER that would cater to a European audience, but still remain connected with the global parent organisation. The next ISBER meeting in Europe was held six years later in Rotterdam, in May 2010. It was at this meeting that a European Chapter Interest Group was formed and subsequently an online discussion group on LinkedIn was set up. This discussion group grew rapidly to 570 members in just over 3 months, which indicated a high level of interest. Subsequently 35 members of this interest group met in Milan on the 27th and 28th August 2010 and decided to take concrete action.

At the Milan meeting it was decided to form a society and independent legal entity as the first step towards becoming a chapter of ISBER. Officers of the society were appointed (president, vice-president, treasurer and executive officer) and three committees were formed (executive, vendor and programme committee). The mission statement of the society was drafted. It was decided that the society will represent Europe, the Middle East and Africa and that the name of the society will be the European, Middle-Eastern and African Society for Biopreservation and Biobanking (ESBB). It was agreed that ESBB will collaborate with EPMA (European Association for Predictive, Preventive and Personalised Medicine) and will make every effort to cooperate with and support the work of BBMRI. Also, it was decided that the first annual meeting of ESBB will be in late 2011.

Since the Milan meeting, all committees have had numerous meetings by audioconference. A memorandum of understanding with EPMA has been signed and a bank account set up for ESBB under the EPMA legal umbrella. A formal proposal has been submitted to the European Science Foundation (ESF) with respect to the ESF call for Research Conference Partnership proposals. EPMA, Cancéropôle Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur and the University of Graz are partner organisations with ESBB in this application. A professional conference organiser (Com & Co) has been selected to organise the November 2011 annual meeting and the venue for this meeting has been booked. Further details of recent progress are provided on this website: <http://www.esbb.org>

2. ESBB’s LinkedIn Group

Analysis of the composition of ESBB’s LinkedIn group provides some indication of the likely future membership of ESBB, although of course the introduction of necessary membership fees will deter some people from joining. Equally it should be noted that some people refuse to join because they do not like LinkedIn itself (for example the privacy policy, the additional messages, the requests for endorsement etc). At the time of writing (mid October 2010) the LinkedIn group includes just over 600 members. As shown in figure 1, the main countries represented are UK (119 members), USA (70), Italy (57), Netherlands (50), France (47), Germany (39), Belgium (36), Spain (22). Many of the USA members represent vendor companies who are interested in the European market for their products. Countries represented in the Middle East include Israel (9), Saudi Arabia (4), Jordan (3), UAE (2) and Qatar (1). From Africa there are 2 members from Egypt and 1 member from each of Kenya, Senegal and South Africa.

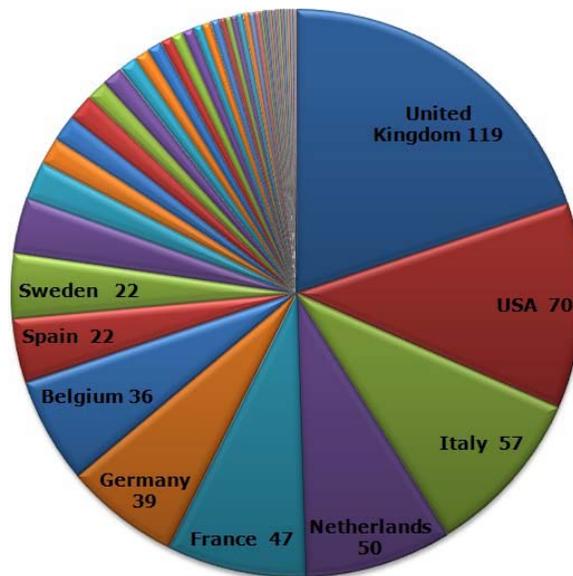


Figure 1. Country of residence for ESBB LinkedIn Discussion Group Members (601 members)

The LinkedIn group membership reflects a high level of interest from vendor companies and a total of 61 different companies supplying the biobanks with equipment and services are represented in the membership. They include multiple companies supplying freezers, tubes, monitoring systems, automation, software, storage services etc. It is also interesting to examine the representation of pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. Out of 12 top-ranked pharmaceutical companies in terms of income, 5 are represented: Pfizer, Roche, Novartis, AstraZeneca and Eli Lilly. Out of 10 top-ranked *in vitro* diagnostic companies (which develop assays for biomarker detection), 4 are represented: Roche Diagnostics, Abbott Diagnostics, Beckman Coulter and Becton Dickinson.

3. BBMRI

Of the other biobanking organisations and societies, the two most relevant to ESBB are ISBER (described above) and BBMRI. The mission of BBMRI is as follows: (i) To prepare for the construction of a pan-European Biobanking and Biomolecular Resources Research Infrastructure (BBMRI) for biomedical and biological research in Europe and worldwide, building on existing infrastructures, resources and technologies, specifically complemented with innovative components and properly embedded into European ethical, legal and societal frameworks. (ii) To benefit European health-care, medical research, and, ultimately, the health of the citizens of the European Union. (iii) To have a sustainable legal and financial conceptual framework for a pan-European Biobank infrastructure. (iv) To increase scientific excellence and efficacy of European research in the life sciences, especially in biomedical research. (v) To expand and secure competitiveness of European research and industry in a global context, especially in the field of medicine and biology. BBMRI was funded by the European Commission for the 3-year preparatory phase which ended in January 2011 and funding responsibility now lies with the member states. More information is available from the BBMRI website: <http://www.bbmri.eu/index.php/home>. Clearly there is a major overlap of interests and potential for synergy between BBMRI and ESBB. One example is the annual meetings organised by ESBB, which could provide a useful discussion forum for BBMRI members. Joint meetings are certainly a possibility and have been discussed with the BBMRI leadership.

As well as the commonalities, there are many differences between ESBB and BBMRI as shown in table 1. This allows plenty of room for both organisations to co-exist. Differences include the geographic region covered, the spectrum of biobank types represented, the sources of funding and the organisational type: The focus of BBMRI is on biobanks of human samples in Europe, while ESBB also includes biobanks of non-human materials and extends to the Middle East and Africa. BBMRI is a pan-European project which relies mainly on government support and funding, while ESBB is a society with support from individual and organisational members, including vendor organisations that supply biobanks with the necessary equipment, software and consumable items.

Table 1. Comparison between ESBB, BBMRI and ISBER

	Regional focus	% European members	European meeting frequency	Vendors involved?	Biobank types	Member types	Participation structure
ESBB	Europe, Africa, Middle East	80%	> 1 per year	Yes	Human and non-human	Individuals, biobanks, vendors	Single level structure, direct participation of biobank and interested individuals
BBMRI	Europe	95%	> 1 per year	No	Human	Funding countries	Tiered structure, direct participation of biobank at country hub level
ISBER	Global (emphasis on USA)	15%	1 every 6 years	Yes	Human and non-human	Individuals, organisations	Single level structure, direct participation of biobank and interested individuals

4. SWOT Analysis

a) Strengths

- ESBB has been established by biobankers for biobankers in the EMEA region.
- Membership benefits can be tailored to their requirements.
- We are in contact with a large number of potential members (600+ members in the LinkedIn group).
- We have the interest and support of vendor organisations which can contribute both intellectually and financially to the society.
- We have gained useful experience from ISBER, since key members of the ESBB executive committee have been actively involved in this society.
- We have support from other organisations in the territory including EPMA and KPole PACA.
- By partnering with ISBER, we can become part of a global organisation.

b) Weaknesses

- Start-up funds are limited.
- We are a young organisation and must learn how to work together as effectively as possible.

- If we are seen as being too commercially-oriented, this will reduce our credibility with some key stakeholders.

c) Opportunities

- To serve the unmet needs of the biobanking community within this region.
- To develop a good working relationship between biobankers, vendors and other groups within the society.
- To adopt the journal Biopreservation and Biobanking as the official journal of the society.
- To offer training courses and certification for biobank staff.
- To provide an accreditation service for biobanks.
- To develop a mutually beneficial relationship with the pharmaceutical industry.
- To collaborate with BBMRI and other organisations within the region.
- To partner with ISBER and so become part of global network.
- To support advancement of biobanking in developing countries within the region, particularly in Africa.
- To provide a voice for biobankers allowing them to influence relevant policy at the national and international levels.

d) Threats

- Volunteer members may not have sufficient time to engage effectively in coordinated activities.
- If we fail to collaborate with other organisations, there will be resulting inefficiencies.
- The financial success of annual meetings cannot be guaranteed for a wide variety of reasons, including earthquakes, volcanos, swine flu, fire, strikes, bomb threats etc.

D. ESBB Role & Objectives

1. Unique Selling Proposal

Over the past 5 years, the rapid growth of biobanks and biobank networks in Europe has heightened the need for communication amongst people involved in biobanking. There is a need for communication to educate, to help solve problems and to develop professional standards in biobanking. Since the practice of biobanking depends on cultural, legal, ethical, political and

geographic factors, it is essential for regional groupings and for regionally-based discussions to occur. For this reason we must have a regional society or association, to help bring together biobankers in the region, so that they can meet and find ways to work together and achieve synergy. We have therefore established a new society to meet these needs and have decided to extend the regional focus to Africa and the Middle East as well, for reasons of geographic proximity and collaborative potential. The new society will be called ESBB and it will provide a regional platform for the interaction between the 5 main actors in the biobanking field: (1) sample providers, (2) biobankers, (3) sample users such as researchers, (4) vendors and (5) specialists as described in figure 2. Until now, no such society has existed to serve either Europe, the Middle East, or Africa.

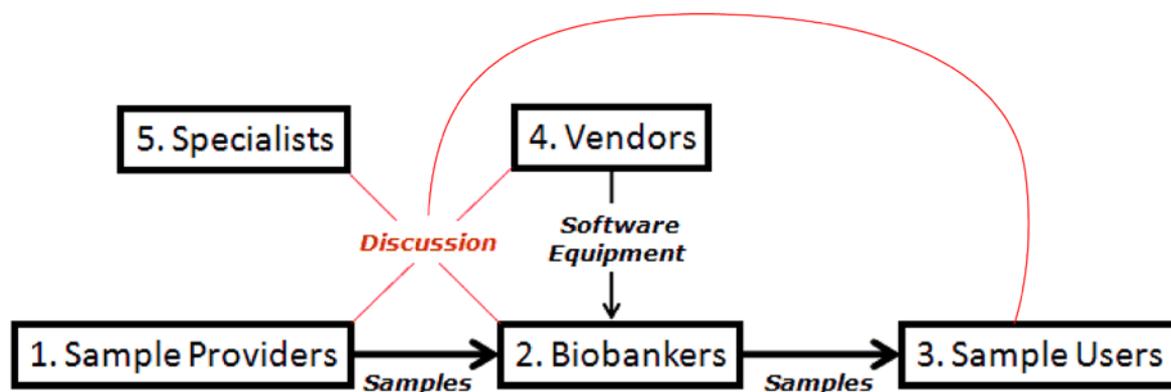


Figure 2. The five main actors in biobanking: (1) sample providers (eg. donors and doctors), (2) biobankers, (3) sample users (eg. researchers in academia and industry), (4) vendors (who supply equipment and consumables) and (5) specialists (eg. lawyers, ethicists, informaticians and engineers with an interest in biobanking). ESBB encourages discussion between all five groups.

2. Vision

ESBB's vision is to play a leading role in promoting the development of biobanking as a profession.

3. Mission

ESBB's mission is to advance the field of biobanking in support of research relating to healthcare, agriculture and the environment.

ESBB works by exchanging, enhancing and disseminating relevant knowledge, by identifying and solving problems, and by encouraging high professional standards in the biobanking field.

ESBB is an open society for people interested in all aspects of biobanking, including biopreservation science, biobank management, quality assurance, informatics, automation, ethical, legal, regulatory and social issues. Members represent the full spectrum of biobanks and biological resource centres, both human and non-human.

4. Values & Ethics

- a) **Sharing:** Share ideas and resources to promote synergy.
- b) **Inclusiveness:** Include all relevant groups, to maximise the benefits that our society can provide.
- c) **Teamwork:** Ensure harmonisation of biobanking practices and to capitalise on the “power of many”.
- d) **Democracy:** Ensure a sense of fairness and encourage member support.
- e) **Recognition:** Recognise and encourage the work of volunteer members.

5. Goals & Strategies

Goal 1. Identify problems in the biobanking field and provide solutions.

- Strategy 1.1. Provide various opportunities for discussion and brainstorming at society meetings and in online discussion fora.
- Strategy 1.2. Encourage working groups to form within the society and support these groups by providing time for them to meet at the annual meeting, opportunities to report on their findings and support for independent meetings or other activities where appropriate.
- Strategy 1.3. Encourage working groups to collaborate with related working groups in other organisations, to avoid duplication of effort and encourage harmonisation where relevant (eg. joint working groups for development of best practice guidelines).

Goal 2. Encourage high professional standards in biobanking.

- Strategy 2.1. Encourage the development of training courses, staff certification, and biobank accreditation, in collaboration with other societies like ISBER and BBMRI. Establish ESBB working groups for this work.

Goal 3. Provide high value membership services for key actors in the biobanking field.

- Strategy 3.1. Establish membership services subcommittee to propose services for review by executive and vendor committees.

Goal 4. Encourage participation from a wide range of repositories across the EMEA region.

- Strategy 4.1. Continue LinkedIn discussion group and consider other social media like Twitter

- Strategy 4.2. Develop ESBB website.
- Strategy 4.3. Email marketing of the society.
- Strategy 4.4. Distribute flyers at relevant conferences.
- Strategy 4.5. Marketing exchanges with other organisations like ISBER and EPMA.

Goal 5. Provide a strong united voice for biobankers in the region, to influence development of their field.

- Strategy 5.1. Establish an outreach committee to take responsibility for communicating the needs of biobankers to EU government and other groups.
- Strategy 5.2. Adopt Biopreservation and Biobanking as the official journal of the society and publish society reports in this journal.

Goal 6. Partner with other organizations involved with, or related to biobanking.

- Strategy 6.1. Establish memorandum of understanding with EPMA, ISBER and BBMRI.
- Strategy 6.2. Become a chapter of ISBER
- Strategy 6.3. Partner with BBMRI and Canceropole PACA in the organisation of annual meetings.
- Strategy 6.4. Partner with organisations like SciColl (museum biobanking) and WFCC (microbial culture collections).

Goal 7. Encourage and support public-private biobank-related partnerships because of their scientific, medical and commercial importance.

- Strategy 7.1. Hold meetings that are highly relevant to the pharmaceutical industry and invite appropriate speakers.
- Strategy 7.2. Establish a working group to focus on facilitating such partnerships.

Goal 8. Promote stakeholder support for biobanking.

- Strategy 8.1. Study the perceptions of the relevant stakeholders, in collaboration with other initiatives like the BBMRI Eurobarometer survey.
- Strategy 8.2. Hold special stakeholder forums, perhaps in collaboration with BBMRI, to focus on concerns of specific groups like patients and the pharmaceutical industry.

- Strategy 8.3. Establish committees or working groups within the society to represent the interests of these specific stakeholder groups.

6. Action Plan

Steps in the action plan are as follows:

- a) Apply for conference funding from European Science Foundation (a full proposal has been submitted).
- b) Apply to become a chapter of ISBER
- c) Raise financial start-up support from vendors and also from pharmaceutical companies and pay for start-up expenses to date.
- d) Develop the members-only section of the ESBB website.
- e) Encourage members of the LinkedIn discussion group to join ESBB as members.
- f) Support EPMA World Congress in September 2011.
- g) Hold a successful annual meeting in November 2011.
- h) Establish ESBB as an independent legal entity.

E. ESBB Governance

In order to ensure efficient and democratic management of the society the following strategies will be adopted:

- ESBB will hold elections for new officers and executive committee members, with changeover of responsibilities at the time of the annual meetings.
- A Vendor's Committee will represent the interests of vendors.
- A Biobank Committee will represent the interests of biobankers.
- Staff will be employed to ensure continuous and effective management, since volunteer members can not be expected to have the necessary time.

At the Milan ESBB meeting in August 2010 a President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Executive Officer were selected, together with members of the Executive Committee, the Vendor Committee and the Programme Committee. The membership of these committees is shown on the ESBB website: <http://www.esbb.org/about.html> and they will function according to operating procedures shown in appendix 1.

Our agreed objective is to hold the first ESBB elections prior to the 1st annual general meeting in November 2011, so that newly elected officers can take up their posts at the time of this meeting. In order to allow time to acclimatise to the Executive Committee, it is proposed that the President elected in late 2011 should not take office as President until November 2012. In the interim period, either the current President could continue in office, or the current Vice-President could take over as president, depending on the Executive Committee's decision.

F. Financial Planning

To ensure adequate funding for the organisation and its meetings, the following strategies have been adopted

- Membership fees have been introduced for individuals and organisations as described on the ESBB website: <http://www.esbb.org/join.html>
- Registration and exhibitor fees have been set for meetings: <http://www.esbb.org/meetings.html>
- Sponsorship opportunities have been established for vendor companies as well as pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies: <http://www.esbb.org/meetings.html>
- A conference grant proposal has been submitted to the European Science Foundation (ESF).

ESBB budget

The ESBB budget is divided into three sections: start-up expenses; non-meeting income & expenses; and meeting income & expenses. These will be described in brief outline below.

(1) Start-up Expenses

The start-up expenses cover activities of the Executive Officer which include the following:

- Business plan preparation.
- Operating procedures preparation.
- Grant application to European Science Foundation.
- Conference planning for the November 2011 meeting.
- Website production.

(2) Non-meeting income & expenses

Non-meeting income in 2011 will come from membership fees, which will be both for individual membership and for the membership of organisations. Applicants who are already ISBER members will be allowed a discount on the ESBB Individual membership fee. Following the ISBER model, organisations will pay a fee related to the number of employees in the organisation. Non-meeting expenses in 2011 will include Executive Officer pay for 20hrs per week to cover all responsibilities detailed in the operating procedures as well as marketing activities, newsletter production, website maintenance and correspondence with the membership. If the time required exceeds the 20 hrs per week allowed, Executive Committee approval will be sought to either increase the time allowance or employ additional staff.

(3) Meeting income & expenses

Meeting income in 2011 will come from registration fees, purchase of exhibitor booths and sponsorship of meeting activities like the conference dinner and the meeting bags. In addition a grant application has been submitted to INSERM by Professor Christian Chabannon of Cancéropôle Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur (PACA) to obtain funding support for this meeting. An application has also been made to the European Science Foundation to obtain funding for a series of 5 annual conferences from 2012 – 2016. Meeting expenses include rental of the venue, catering, professional conference organiser (PCO fees) and support for invited speaker travel and accomodation.

Conference Partnership Proposal to the ESF

An application to the ESF has been made for support of meetings from 2012 – 2016. The title of the proposed conference series is *“Advancing Biopreservation Science and Establishing Biobanking as a Profession”*. For this application, ESBB will initially be under the legal umbrella of EPMA, which will initially be the official coordinating partner organisation. ESBB will work closely with members of additional partner organisations including Professor Christian Chabannon, Professor Paul Hofman and Professor Dominique Figarella Branger of Cancéropôle Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur (KPole PACA) and Professor Kurt Zatloukal and colleagues of the Medical University of Graz. The location proposed for this conference series is Marseille, France. One or more of the conferences will be held at other European locations including the Medical University of Graz. This will be discussed with the partner organisations at a later date. The conference series will start with an inaugural conference where the theme will be the identification of major challenges and opportunities in biobanking for the next 5 years. ESBB working groups will play a part in ensuring that the challenges and opportunities identified are acted upon promptly in the interval between the annual conferences.

G. Membership Benefits

1. Key Benefits of ESBB Membership

ESBB provides a wide range of benefits to its members, which include generous discounts on fees to register for meetings and purchase exhibitor booths. So for people planning to attend ESBB meetings there are strong financial incentives to join the society as a member. Once people join as ESBB members become part of a community where there are valuable interactions throughout the year (not just at meetings). These interactions are facilitated by the society, by its committees and the internet resources it makes available.

Three of the most important benefits offered by ESBB are education, networking and team support:

Educational benefits will be provided both at meetings and through the website. ESBB will have annual conferences which are expected to attract over 300 delegates, and will feature lectures from leaders in biobanking and related fields. Delegates will have the opportunity to make oral and poster presentations, in order to report on their work and invite feedback. They will be able to attend workshops, to visit exhibitor booths and to participate in working groups on a range of topics. There will be training workshops attached to annual conferences and also as separate events throughout the year. There will also be opportunities for e-learning and webinars will be shown on the ESBB website.

Networking opportunities provided at annual meetings, include round-table lunches, exhibitor booths, poster sessions, receptions, banquets and visits to local sites of interest. Between meetings, networking is facilitated by the listserv discussion forum and by telephone conference calls for the regular committee meetings. This networking helps develop a community in which people know each others interests and strengths and can choose to work together on different projects and initiatives.

Teams will be formed as a result of this networking. Some will be independent and perhaps business related. Others like committees and working groups, will be teams that operate within the society and are supported by society resources. Working groups are teams that address specific problems and generate a work product generally in the form of a published report. Through the listserv, the society as a whole also forms a team and through the efforts of all these teams combined, ESBB has the potential to provide a common voice for members and the potential to help shape the future of the biobanking field.

2. Membership Benefit Packages

ESBB offers 3 different membership benefit packages: (a) Individual membership, (b) Biobank/Institutional membership and (c) Corporate membership. The benefits of these packages are described in detail on the ESBB website. Briefly they are as follows:

(a) Individual membership benefits include:

- i. Membership of an interactive community of biobanking professionals across the EMEA region.
- ii. Substantial discounts on ESBB meeting registration fees.
- iii. Access to resources in the ESBB members portal which will include a communications forum, membership directory and various information resources.
- iv. Eligibility to join ESBB committees
- v. Eligibility to form and to join ESBB working groups which provide the opportunity to develop one's own knowledge, to find solutions to common problems and to produce reports and publications that will help advance the biobanking field.
- vi. Eligibility to run for office in ESBB elections for President, Treasurer and Executive Committee members.
- vii. Eligibility to vote in ESBB elections.
- viii. Eligibility to post information about meetings, courses and jobs the ESBB website.
- ix. Access to a teleconference facility for ESBB-related calls.
- x. Receipt of the quarterly ESBB Newsletter.

(b) Biobank / Institutional membership benefits include:

- i. All the benefits of Individual membership for multiple representatives or delegates.
- ii. Membership discount on ESBB meeting registration fees for all employees.
- iii. Listing of the Biobank / Institution on the public section of the ESBB website (optional).
- iv. Listing in the members-only section of the website. This is optional.
- v. Eligibility to participate in ESBB consortia for project and programme grant applications.
- vi. Eligibility to join the ESBB Biobank committee.
- vii. Eligibility to use the ESBB logo on the website and printed materials of the Biobank / Institution.
- viii. Access to a dedicated website resources including a forum specifically for Biobank / Institutional members within the members-only section of the website.

(c) Corporate membership benefits include:

- i. All of the benefits for Individual membership for multiple representatives or delegates.
- ii. Membership discount on ESBB meeting registration fees for all employees of the company.

- iii. Access to the biobanking experts and potential customers in the ESBB membership.
- iv. Substantial discount on exhibitor booth fees.
- v. Eligibility to advertise company details in the Vendors section of the ESBB website and in the ESBB quarterly newsletter.
- vi. Eligibility to host corporate workshops at ESBB meetings.
- vii. Opportunity to present during scientific sessions under the regulation of the Vendor Committee.
- viii. Opportunities to organise training workshops.
- ix. Eligibility to join the ESBB Vendor Committee.

3. Ensuring Benefits for the Five Key Groups in Biobanking

As described previously, ESBB provides a platform for the interaction between the five main actors in the biobanking field which are: (i) sample providers, (ii) biobankers, (iii) sample users such as researchers, (iv) vendors and (v) specialists on biobanking-related topics. In order to maintain the involvement of all five actors, ESBB must provide membership benefits and meeting attractions for each one of them. It is not difficult to see how ESBB caters to biobankers and vendors. These are the two largest groups of members and each one has a dedicated membership category and package of benefits as described above. The other three main actors will now be considered.

Sample providers include patients, patient representatives and clinicians. These are vital stakeholders whose support is essential for biobanking efforts to succeed. The most important group to focus on here are the patient representatives, since the clinician's perspective is provided by the many biobankers who are also clinicians. To ensure that patient representatives want to be involved in ESBB, we must provide them with a forum for discussion, opportunities to express the patient's point of view and opportunities to work with colleagues in ESBB to bring about positive change. With this in mind, ESBB will regularly invite patient representatives to speak at its conferences and workshops. As members of ESBB, patient representatives will be able to participate in on-line discussion fora and exchange ideas with other members. They will also be able to post information on dedicated sections of the ESBB website, which they may use as a platform to promote their activities both inside and outside the society. By providing patient representatives with abundant opportunities to express the views of patients, we should be able to ensure their continued involvement in ESBB.

Sample users are the researchers who obtain samples and data from biobanks in order to carry out their studies. Biobanks require feedback from sample users, to know how to improve their service and meet user needs. This feedback can be encouraged by the choice of speakers and sessions at conferences, and by the establishment of appropriate on-line discussion fora. Since many biobankers are themselves researchers and sample users, this group will be well represented in the ESBB membership. However, there is one subgroup of sample users which we must make special efforts to reach and this is the sample users in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries. Reasons for

this include the fact that biobanked samples are increasingly important in the development of drugs and diagnostics, so there are opportunities for public-private partnership from which all players can benefit. Since industry needs high quality samples it has a vested interest in improving biobanking standards and as a result, it should be possible to encourage industry sponsorship of ESBB. For these reasons, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies need to be involved in ESBB activities. This can be achieved by inviting industry representatives to speak at our conferences and also by offering membership benefits that will be useful to researchers in industry. One example would be a sample locator service, to enable industry researchers to find samples for their research.

Specialists on biobanking-related topics are likely to form a significant group within ESBB. These include lawyers, regulatory experts, sociologists, ethicists, informaticians, cryobiologists and others, who have expertise that is directly relevant to biobanking. Their intellectual input is vital to the society and so they must be invited as speakers, encouraged to join as members and encouraged to participate actively in discussion fora, committees and working groups. As ESBB's reputation grows as a key player in the biobanking field, increasing numbers of specialists and special experts are likely to become involved.

4. Future Membership Benefits

The membership benefits offered by ESBB are not absolutely fixed and will evolve with time. The Executive Committee will take advice from both the Vendor Committee and the Biobanks Committee, on ways in which the membership benefits can be improved. Some membership benefits and services that have already been identified as goals for the future, include:

- Free online access to the journal, Biopreservation and Biobanking
- Educational courses in biobanking
- Biobank staff certification
- Biobank certification / accreditation

5. Return on investment for grant funding agencies and other sponsors

As described in ESBB's mission statement, the purpose of ESBB is "to advance the field of biobanking in support of research relating to healthcare, agriculture and the environment". Advancing the field of biobanking can have wide ranging effects in many different fields. It may contribute to the development of new medicines with healthcare and economic benefits. Equally, it may contribute to advances in agriculture and the maintenance of biodiversity. For these reasons everybody is a stakeholder in the field of biobanking and so with the right marketing strategy there should be many people and organisations who will want to support ESBB.
