



Infrastructure for Systems Biology Europe

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“A set of defined access rules for clients that want to make use of the ISBE infrastructure”

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Preamble

The aim of ISBE is to create a pan-European infrastructure for systems biology that empowers life scientists to understand living organisms to a much higher precision and in a predictive way. This will allow intervention in the functioning of biological systems in a predictive and rational manner. The infrastructure will enable scientists in academia, the health sector and industry to access and exploit the full potential of data-driven computational modelling of complex biological systems with the required reproducibility and validation. It will provide the expertise, tools and resources to address current and future grand challenges in healthcare, agriculture and industrial biotechnology, thereby enhancing the wealth and well-being of European citizens.

ISBE will do this by constructing and managing a distributed research infrastructure of interconnected national Systems Biology Centres (nSBCs) that will provide resources and services, coordinated at the national and European levels.

This report summarises a set of access rules for clients that want to make use of the ISBE infrastructure.

Services offered by ISBE

ISBE intends to offer the following services, which are described in detail in the ISBE Business Case (published November 2014):

- access to resources, i.e. tools, data, maps, models and standards
- modelling of biological systems based on integration of diverse data sets
- stewardship and standardisation of model-compliant data and models making results re-usable
- brokerage to refer users to research centres (not necessarily associated with ISBE) that are able to generate integratable and model-compliant experimental data
- development and implementation of community standards

Services are offered in various ways:

- web-based access to repositories and archives
- consultancy
- contract activities
- education and training

Modes of access

ISBE considers the following three modes of access all being applicable:

1. Wide access

This broadest possible access to users is through ISBE's (i) web access to resources, (ii) simple consultancy services, (iii) stewardship, standardisation and other community activities, (iv) training and education activities, and (v) brokerage to refer users to research centres that are able to generate integratable and model-compliant data.

2. Excellence-driven access and market-driven access

ISBE offers modelling and other services that are based on integration of diverse data sets and that require a significant effort by ISBE. These require a formal contract and a fee and are exclusively accessible in relation to research activities that fulfil high scientific standards.

Access policy

ISBE aims to be accessible to any scientist from European academia, hospitals/clinics and industry, including SMEs. Access to the infrastructure will be easy and efficient through a central web portal. ISBE intends to support users that are proficient in systems biology, as well as those that do not (yet) have expertise in this field. This aims to enhance the dissemination and implementation of systems biology in European life sciences.

After initial contact through the ISBE web portal, users will be linked to one of the national Systems Biology Centres (nSBCs) that is able to provide the requested services. For complex problems that require services from several nSBCs, ISBE will form an ad hoc consortium of two or more nSBCs. In all cases the user will have a single ISBE officer as contact person.

Access to ISBE's web-based resources and simple consultancy activities will be free of charge. Services that are more elaborate, such as modelling and model validation, will require a fee based on a contract between ISBE and the user, often through the relevant nSBC. Cost models for such contract activities will be developed together with national funders and the nSBCs. Training and education activities will be developed and offered through individual or groups of nSBCs. Costs for ISBE clients will depend on the type of training/education and the tariff defined by the nSBC(s).

Access restrictions

Access to web-based resources will be unrestricted. Also simple consultancy activities may be expected to be quick and free of charge. The volume of contract activities will depend on the capacity of nSBCs. Here, ISBE should be able to adapt to the development of user needs. ISBE will set quality standards for all its activities. It is expected that research projects requesting services will often have already gone through a review process by national or European funders. In the absence of such a review, ISBE will carry out its own peer review through a transparent procedure to ensure quality standards.