



## Summary Report of the ELIXIR Industry Advisory Committee meeting Hinxton, 14th of January 2016

This report is the public summary of the IAC's recommendations to ELIXIR following its meeting in January 2016.

### **General**

The ELIXIR IAC considers ELIXIR to be a well managed, well structured and effective organisation in terms of expansion to cover new Member States, ability to secure grants and new funding channels to support its efforts. It provides clear structure and aims and well defined roles for its Members.

The infrastructure appears to be an effective forum for interaction with industry, takes these demands seriously, and is building good links with other successful industry-academia initiatives such as the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI).

### **Promotion of ELIXIR Node services**

The IAC recognises that it is early in the operational phase of ELIXIR and that the EXCELERATE grant is currently the mechanism for achieving delivery of many ELIXIR services.

However, in order to show that ELIXIR is delivering on objectives, it would be good to see a services catalogue of resources that ELIXIR can offer and more information on timelines for when further output will become available.

Now that the overall goals of ELIXIR are more widely known, it would be an opportunity to work on promoting specific services of the ELIXIR Nodes, which could take the form of a roadmap of services each of the Nodes plans to deliver, as there is currently a lack of visibility in this regard.

There should be consideration of how the achievements of the Nodes are communicated back through the ELIXIR Hub. ELIXIR Nodes should be encouraged to reach out to local groups and user communities. A list of key interactions and collaborations in which each Node is involved would also be useful.

Multiple channels should be opened up for industry to collaborate with ELIXIR, as engaging in direct discussions may not always be a priority for the local Nodes. Core resources will be important in creating a way to engage efficiently.



## **Communication with Industry**

In order to continue to simplify and disseminate the message about ELIXIR, a definitive peer reviewed article that can be cited - explaining what ELIXIR is - would be useful in contextualising and raising awareness. Additionally, a short video would be recommended, that is designed to introduce ELIXIR to people who have little or no previous exposure.

ELIXIR has established good contact with many companies or organisations, but should think more about developing channels for reaching out to new contacts in order to raise awareness further and ensure usage of ELIXIR resources.

It would be recommended ELIXIR seek new opportunities for conference presence outside of its comfort zone and usual channels, otherwise there is a risk of preaching to the converted.

The IAC feels the Innovation and SME Programme (for example in Wageningen) and the upcoming [Open Data in Action event](#) in Brussels are valuable efforts. ELIXIR should look to continue these efforts across other countries.

## **Training**

Training is an important KPI for ELIXIR and seems to be making good progress. They are doing the right things, but the overall vision in terms of training was not clear.

Training is something everyone can relate to when asked about the benefit of ELIXIR. ELIXIR's unique position to offer flexibility to adapt to specific areas, in particular to SMEs, is a key benefit. As is the ability to share training materials and save duplication of effort. ELIXIR is encouraged to further develop the two way street in the continuous development and distribution of training materials.

In terms of methodologies for training, the IAC would recommend a mixture of online courses and hands on training, between one to three days maximum duration, which feed into continuous professional development, noting that workshops are not the same as hands on training. Mixed courses with flexibility - software carpentry, data carpentry and statistics, for example, are particularly recommended.



An ELIXIR certified training 'Quality stamp' to deliver a particular services would also be of value to industry.

As it will be key to ensure topics are relevant to the audience, the IAC recommends gathering further input on topics of current and future relevance. One particular opportunity for ELIXIR is in the training the company managers, who tend to be very specialised in their area of interest.

ELIXIR is in a good position to be seen as authoritative voice to aid decision-making, in offering courses that set the scene and advise of the options with a balanced voice, rather than advertising one solution.

In advertising the courses it would be recommended avoiding using unnecessary jargon, for example 'Course on protein sequences and protein structure' instead of a course on a specific resources such as uniprot.

### **Engagement with industry groups**

The ELIXIR IAC would recommend direct engagement with EFPIA outside of IMI. Deeper engagement with IMI directly would also be welcome. IMI projects should start by talking with ELIXIR early about data sustainability, as there is a role for ELIXIR in creating long term sustainability of data, and as an advocate for open data.

One extension of key initiatives already happening with IMI ([OncoTrack](#)), is in creating longevity of outputs of IMI projects. ELIXIR can act as platform for taking these projects to the next stage and to give them life outside IMI.

The IAC recommends engaging with these projects in the early stages of the data planning process, and through the provision of guidelines or framework that they can adopt.

There is also the opportunity for ELIXIR act as a forum for brokering a larger agreement for collaboration for industry - such as country-wide collaborations between health systems and EFPIA industry members enabled by the nodes.



## **Long-term sustainability and funding models**

The need for industry to access multiple databases for R&D is great. In fields such as drug discovery, it is vital that companies can access multiple data sources from across the life sciences.

Open, unlicensed access is important in ensuring continuous data flow between resources as there are many dependencies between archives. Access payment models can be a blocker for business development and the current public model of free access to resources for all, where the core archives are run by major institutes, is likely to be the most efficient. However, this requires continuous lobbying to build the case and demonstrate the impact around this to ensure continued funding.

Where access fees for services are required it is recommended to ensure simple access and contractual agreements. Models such as [CTTV](#) where a large investment is required, and [Gene consortia around Genomics England](#) are good examples of where industry pays a form of membership fee to access.

## **Demonstrating impact**

ELIXIR should continue to build examples of industry impact, including patent information and case studies where appropriate. There is also a need for ongoing communication between ELIXIR and publishers on referencing data sources to ensure that data in publications can be linked clearly and effectively to the relevant databases. This includes referencing open/public data sources in the literature and nascent efforts to connect literature with non-public, sensitive or clinical research data.