

Project Management of Project Requests

Lea PAPIĆ, Karine SARGSYAN, Franziska VOGL, Sebastian FUCHS, Annemarie MAROLD,
Berthold HUPPERTZ
BIOBANK GRAZ
Medical University of Graz, Austria

Background

The significance of a biobank is not only defined by the sample collection size, but also by the fact of how often samples are requested and used for research. The number of requests for high quality biological samples needed for biomedical research is constantly increasing. At the same time, collection, storage, delivery and use of clinical samples (tissues, blood and other body fluids) with the corresponding data from medical records has to be handled following ethical guidelines.

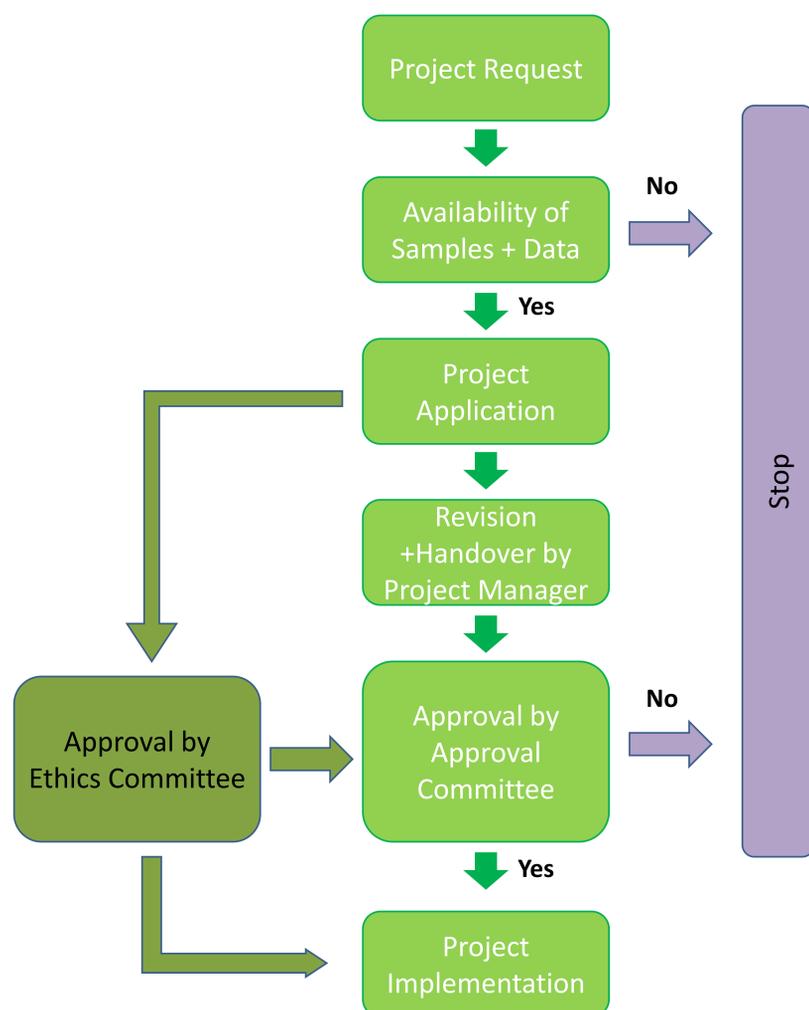
Methods

At Biobank Graz samples are delivered to the research groups following a standardized workflow and standard operating procedures (SOPs). Any research project asking for samples/data has to be reviewed by an approval committee (AC) with five scientists from Medical University of Graz. The researchers asking for samples/data also need to provide an approval of an ethics committee for the project that approves the use of the samples for the requested methods. Only the samples linked to an informed consent declaration signed by patients and donors at the University Hospital Graz are used for research in an anonymized form.

Results

The standardized workflow at Biobank Graz consists of the following steps:

- (1) The researcher has to send a project request.
- (2) The biobank project manager checks sample/data availability. The availability of samples/data is communicated to the researcher. This is in interactive process that may take weeks based on the details and experience of the researcher.
- (3) If the samples/data meeting the needed criteria are available, the researcher has to send a project application containing a more detailed project description.
- (4) This application will be checked by the biobank project manager.
- (5) The approval committee (AC) decides if the samples/data should be handed out for this specific project or not. The AC members analyse the scientific significance of the project based on the study protocol, project application and the opinion of the biobank representative of the clinic providing the samples asked for. In parallel, a positive vote of an ethics committee is needed.
- (6) After the AC has given a positive vote, the procedure of providing samples for the project starts and may take some weeks. This is due to the fact that tissue samples are always re-evaluated by a pathologist and also, only anonymized samples and data are released.



Conclusion

The importance of biological samples for biomedical research is indisputable. However, special attention needs to be given to sample and data quality as well as protection of the individual rights of the donors. Hence, samples are only provided after a careful examination process of each project.