

Challenges and Driving Forces for Business Plans in Biobanking

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Background: Due to increased utilization of biospecimens for research and emergence of new technologies, the availability and quality of biospecimens and their collection are coming more and more into focus. However, the long-term economic situation of biobanks is still mostly unclear. Also, the common sustainable utilization of various international biobanks is challenging due to local differences in sample processing, law and ethics.

Aim: This article discusses possible strategies to achieve a sustainable utilization of biospecimens as part of the business plan of biobanks.

Methods: The following questions were addressed as part of a business plan: (1) How can a biobank build up and maintain an up-to-date infrastructure? (2) What kind of funding can support the sustainability of a biobank? (3) Is there an international solution for informed consents to enable sample and data sharing? (4) How can a biobank react during economically unstable periods? (5) Which kind of biobanking research is innovative? (6) What kind of education could be most needful for knowledge transfer in biobanking? (7) Does an expiration date for a biobank make sense according to the period of funding?

Conclusion: A strategy for optimal utilization begins with sharing of resources, infrastructure, and investments at the planning stage of a biobank, and continues to the transfer of knowledge and know-how by education. For clinical biobanks in particular, a long-term funding and cost recovery strategy is necessary for sustainable utilization.

Keywords: clinical biobank, economics, law and ethics