

ERIC Forum Implementation Project

Set up of ERIC Forum bodies

Work Package 1 - Deliverable 1.1

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Deliverable Title	Set up of ERIC Forum bodies
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Responsible Partner	Biobanking and BioMolecular Research Infrastructure – European Research Infrastructure Consortium (BBMRI-ERIC)
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Executive summary

D1.1 describes the governance structure of the ERIC Forum Implementation Project, highlighting how it interfaces with the governance of the ERIC Forum, creating a symbiotic, efficient decision making structure that allows both the finalisation of the project's deliverables and the overall development of the ERIC Forum.

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Document log

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1. Background

According to the ERIC Forum Implementation Project Consortium Agreement, Section 6 “Governance Structure” the governance is structured on several levels:

- General Assembly as the ultimate decision-making body of the consortium. The GA will be responsible for monitoring the Project implementation and determining the strategy and direction of the Project.
- Executive Board as the supervisory body for the execution of the Project. The Executive Board is responsible for the day-to-day management of the project and it is in charge of the project strategy, budget, communication and general direction. The Executive Board reports to and be accountable to the General Assembly. The Executive Board is composed of all project’s work package leaders and the project coordinator, who also chairs the Board’s meetings.
- The Coordinator is the legal entity acting as the intermediary between the Parties and the Funding Authority. The Coordinator shall, in addition to its responsibilities as a Party, perform the tasks assigned to it as described in the Grant Agreement and this Consortium Agreement.

2. Issues with the original D1.1 set up

Since before kick-off meeting, 2 main issues have been raised by the beneficiaries concerning the set-up of the ERIC Forum bodies:

- Overlap between the bodies of the ERIC Forum and the project
- Functions of the External Advisory Board

Those issues show a disconnect between the final text of the project proposal and the development of the ERIC Forum between the closure of the call and the start of the project. In that period, the Forum kept working informally, developing new modus operandi that made the provisions in the proposal/Grant Agreement obsolete by the time the project kicked off.

Overlap between the bodies of the ERIC Forum and the project.

The launch of the project created 2 sets of governance bodies linked to the ERIC Forum:

- The project’s governance
- The ERIC Forum governance

Since the kick off meeting, the overlap was identified as a crucial risk for the management of both the project and the ERIC Forum, potentially creating 2 sets of competing governing bodies.

At the same time, a whole work package of the project is dedicated to setting up a new governance model for the ERIC Forum. The strong collaboration between the project coordinator and the Chairs of the ERIC Forum ensured that the transition period between the kick off of the meeting and the approval of the new governance model (M12).

For this reason, depicting the de fact governance of both the project and ERIC Forum in M1 would have become quickly obsolete and therefore not useful to describe the real working methods between Forum and project.

External Advisory Board

The grant agreement includes the creation of the EAB as an advisory body to the Project's governance within deliverable D1.1. The GA details the composition of the EAB (5 members, including representatives from the European Commission, ESFRI, ERIC Committee). The project coordinator invited the mentioned external bodies to join the EAB, but third parties did not see value on taking part to such board and declined participation. The EAB defines the key ERIC Forum stakeholders, which are already engaged in the activities of the Forum, hence the EAB would create an overlap between the project and the Forum.

In essence, the objectives of the EAB overlap with the overall objectives of the ERIC Forum, i.e. to better connect the ERICs community to key stakeholders. This is something the ERIC Forum has achieved already in its first 6 months of operations, without the need to formalize a complex advisory board structure and engage all parties in a forced dialogue, as described in the EAB, making it redundant and undesirable for the parties involved. For example, members of ESFRI, ERIC Committee and European Commission were involved in WP4 activities related to monitoring and KPI for ERICs, effectively providing guidance and support to the project's deliverables, but without the need for a formal relationship like the EAB.

However, consortium believed it useful to take the following actions to anchor some of the stakeholders closer to the ERIC Forum activities:

- In the ERIC Forum rules of procedure (D2.2) the ERICs deemed wise to include a clause in the rules granting permanent Observership rights to the European Commission to the ERIC Forum General Assembly;
- The Communication Strategy (D5.1) ESFRI, ERIC Committee and European Commission are defined as key stakeholders, target of specific communication activities.
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Amendment

As a result of the internal discussions concerning the two issues mentioned, the beneficiaries agreed to amend D1.1, since the deliverable significantly changed in content due to the changes in the project's organization:

- Delay D1.1 to M25, following the completion of WP2 tasks
- Delete the External Advisory Board.

The European Commission agreed to the amendment in September 2021.

At the same time, all main project bodies (General Assembly, Project Management Team) have been set up and were operational since February 2019.

3. ERIC Forum and project bodies

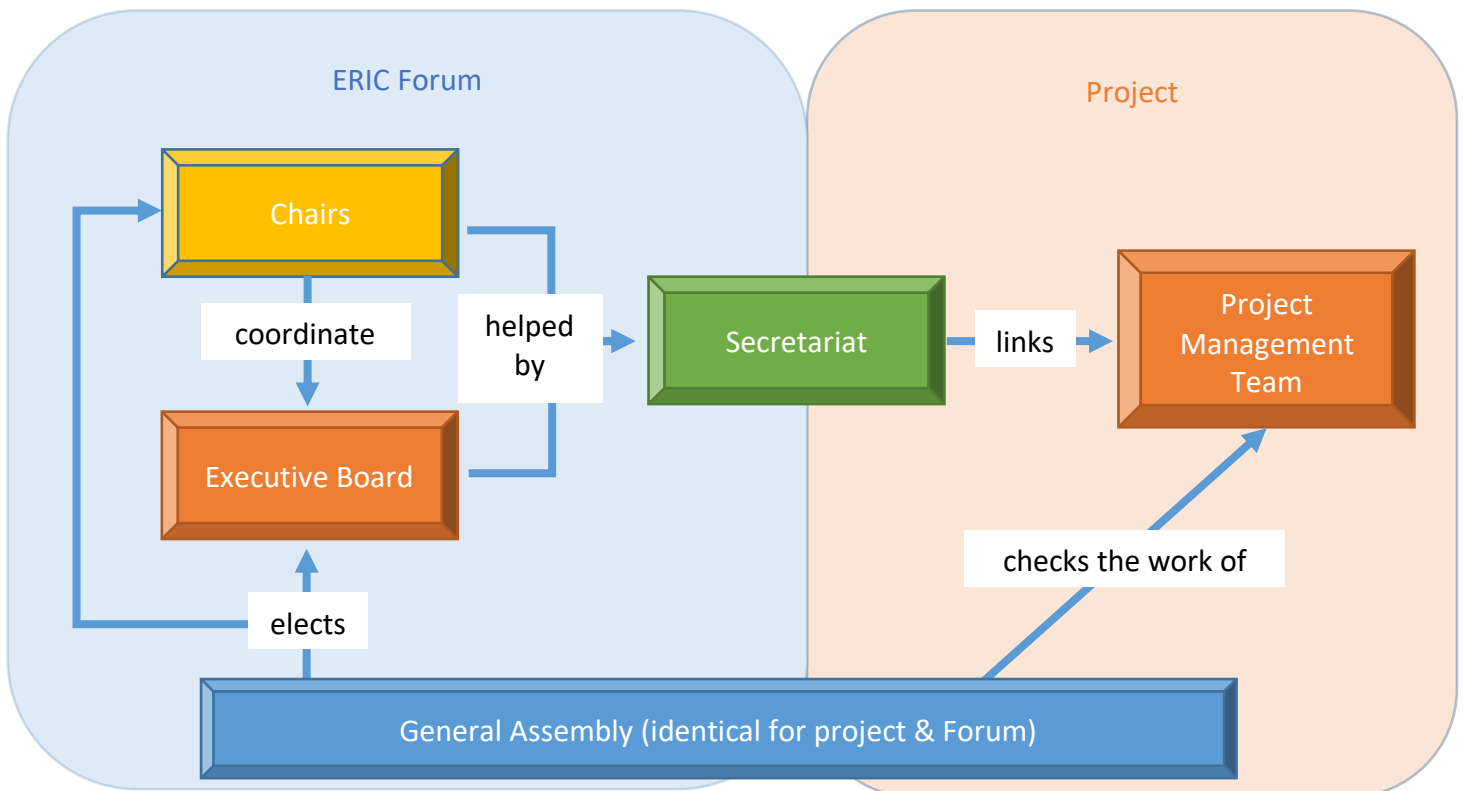
As decided at the project’s kick off meeting, the project would work in full coordination and symbiosis with the ERIC Forum, to:

- Ensure that the project deliverables contribute to the development of the Forum;
- Take into consideration the contingent needs of the Forum into the organisation of project’s activities (such as meetings, workshops, webinars, communication activities etc).

To these ends, the following table summarises the existing governance bodies for the Forum and the project, highlighting how they interact to ensure full symbiosis between Forum and project.

The following paragraphs will describe only the project bodies. Forum bodies are described in D2.1 and D2.2.

Role	ERIC Forum	Project
Ultimate decision maker	General Assembly	General Assembly (identical to Forum)
General direction / strategy	Executive Board (Chairs + clusters members)	
Representation	Chairs	
Executive bodies	Executive Board	Project Management Team
Day-to-day management	Secretariat (including project coordinator)	



4. General Assembly

General Assembly (GA) is the ultimate decision-making body of the consortium. The GA will be responsible for monitoring the Project implementation and determining the strategy and direction of the Project. The GA meets at least once a year, in occasion of the ERIC Forum Annual Meeting (Q1 of each year). The GA is composed of representatives from all project's beneficiaries.

5. Project Management Team

The Project Management Team (PMT) is the supervisory body for the execution of the Project. This body changed its name from Executive Board to PMT, to avoid confusion with the Executive Board of the ERIC Forum (composed of Chairs + 5 to 7 representatives from the different clusters).

The PMT is responsible for the day-to-day management of the project and it is in charge of the project strategy, budget, communication and general direction. The PMT reports to and is accountable to the General Assembly.

The PMT meets once a month, or when necessary due to project activities. The Project Coordinator calls for meetings, sets the agenda and produces minutes/action points following the meeting, which are stored in the dedicated folder on the project's SharePoint.

6. Secretariat

The Secretariat connects the PMT with the ERIC Forum Executive Board (ExBo) and Chairs. It is composed of volunteers from the Chairs' ERICs and the Project Coordinators. The Secretariat manages the day-to-day operations of the ERIC Forum and the project, providing support to the ExBo and the Chairs, and ensuring effective communication between the Forum and project.

7. Annexes

[Annex 1 - Minutes ERIC Forum implementation kick off meeting FINAL](#)

[Annex 2 - Minutes ERIC Forum implementation PMT Jan 2019 FINAL](#)