Deliverable 2.3

Survey form for feedback from users, hosts and stakeholders accessing the infrastructure

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1. Summary of results

This survey was developed to evaluate the experiences of researchers who accessed transnational research infrastructures through the EUROFAANG consortium. Its primary aim is to gather structured feedback on the application process, execution, and outcomes of Transnational Access (TNA) projects, with a strong emphasis on strengthening scientific collaboration, enhancing user support, and maximizing the societal impact of the research conducted. The survey evaluates how applicants learned about the TNA opportunity, how accessible and clear the application documentation and criteria were, and the extent of interaction with host institutions during the proposal phase.

The survey investigates the execution of funded projects, including the adequacy of supervision and resources, the availability and sufficiency of funds, and whether the intended outcomes such as data generation, biological materials, or knowledge transfer were achieved. It also tracks how results are shared (publicly, privately, or under specific conditions), which is essential for open science and reproducibility. A dedicated section focuses on the development of research networks, recognizing the role of collaboration in advancing animal genomics. Respondents are asked to reflect on the importance of networking, whether new collaborations emerged, and if ongoing or future partnerships are expected. This helps to identify the infrastructures that act as hubs for scientific exchange and long-term cooperation. We also focus on techniques used during the research visit to evaluate potential preferences of technical use in the community and possible deficiencies.

Overall, the survey aims to not only assess individual experiences but also guide the EUROFAANG consortium in optimizing the structure, accessibility, knowledge content and collaborative potential of its research infrastructure.

It has to be noted, that the EuroFAANG concept development project does not provide a structured TNA process at the current stage of the project. With the application for the preparatory phase within the ESFRI 2026 roadmap update with the “GenoPHEnix RI” proposal a test phase for TNA applications and access will be installed by 2029. Within the planned Implementation Phase, ongoing from 2030, the TNA procedure shall be fully operational and grant access towards the experimental and laboratory facilities, which are members of GenoPHEnix. The current proposal includes 16 institutions from 11 Member States, 154 facilities and 503 services that can be offered for TNA access towards the future RI.

2. Introduction

The EUROFAANG consortium is a European collaborative initiative dedicated to advancing functional annotation of animal genomes, with a particular focus on key livestock species such as cattle, pigs, poultry, sheep, and horses. Inspired by the principles of the international FAANG initiative (Functional Annotation of Animal Genomes), EUROFAANG unites a network of scientists, research infrastructures, and institutions working toward a shared goal: to better understand the link between the genome and observable traits in farmed animals. This knowledge is fundamental to addressing major challenges in livestock production, including improving animal health and welfare, enhancing sustainability, and developing resilient agricultural systems in the face of climate change.

A cornerstone of EUROFAANG's approach is its emphasis on collaboration and open science. Tackling the complexity of animal genomes and their functional elements requires access to specialized expertise, advanced technologies, and unique biological samples and resources that are often distributed across different countries and institutions. To overcome this, EUROFAANG has established a Transnational Access (TNA) framework, which enables researchers from across Europe and beyond to access cutting-edge facilities, data, and know-how hosted at partner infrastructures. By facilitating access to shared resources, the TNA system promotes efficient use of public investment in research and supports the training and mobility of scientists, especially early-career researchers.

Sharing infrastructure via TNA has multiple benefits. It accelerates scientific discovery by allowing researchers to apply the best available methods and technologies to their projects, rather than being limited by local capacities. It promotes interdisciplinary and cross-border collaboration, leading to new partnerships and innovative research directions. Moreover, it helps standardize experimental protocols and data formats, thereby increasing the comparability and reusability of data. These elements are crucial to building a coherent and sustainable European research landscape in animal genomics.

Given the strategic importance of the TNA system, it is essential to evaluate how well it functions in practice. While enabling access is a powerful tool, the success of TNA also depends on clear application procedures, transparent evaluation criteria, supportive hosting environments, and tangible scientific outcomes. Furthermore, TNA is not only about access it is also a driver of knowledge exchange and network-building. As such, understanding the user experience is key to ensuring that the system continues to deliver value, both scientifically and societally.

This survey has been designed to collect detailed feedback from researchers who will participate in TNA projects within the EUROFAANG framework. It addresses all stages of the process, from discovering the TNA opportunity to submitting an application, executing the project, and building follow-up collaborations. The aim is to assess not only the

operational efficiency of the program but also its impact on scientific community. In summary, EUROFAANG's TNA system represents a vital mechanism for sharing knowledge and expertise across Europe's animal genomics community. Evaluating this system through structured feedback is essential to identify strengths, uncover challenges, and shape a model for collaborative research.

3. Core report

This survey is aimed at researchers, students and professionals that will use the EUROFAANG infrastructures for their studies (transnational access)

3.1 User contact information

Table 1: User information for TNA

CONTACT PERSON:	
CONTACT EMAIL:	
POSITION:	
INSTITUTION NAME	
COUNTRY	
TYPE OF ORGANIZATION	University Public Research Institute Private Research Institute Company Other

3.2 Host institute where the TNA project was conducted

- Host institute address:
- Contact person for the host institute:

3.3 RI TNA application process

We are evaluating the accessibility and clarity of the TNA application process within the EUROFAANG consortium. Your feedback will help us improve future access calls and support researchers more effectively.

3.1.1. Awareness

How did you first become aware of the TNA opportunities offered by EUROFAANG? (Select all that apply)

☐ Email or mailing list (e.g., project newsletter, institutional distribution)

☐ A colleague or supervisor

☐ Scientific conference or workshop

☐ Web search (e.g., Google, institutional websites)

☐ Social media (e.g., Twitter, LinkedIn)

☐ EUROFAANG website directly

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Please feel free to comment on where or how you searched for information:

_____

_____

3.3.2 Access to Information

Was the documentation for the TNA application process easy to find?

☐ Very easy

☐ Somewhat easy

☐ Neutral

☐ Somewhat difficult

☐ Very difficult

☐ Not applicable / I didn't look for documentation

3.3.3 Clarity of Documentation

How would you rate the clarity of the TNA application guidelines and documentation?

☐ Very clear

☐ Somewhat clear

☐ Neutral

☐ Somewhat unclear

☐ Very unclear

What could be improved in the documentation?

_____

_____

3.3.4 Support During Application

Did you receive any support or feedback from the host facility during the preparation of your project description/application?

☐ Yes, extensive feedback

☐ Yes, some limited feedback

☐ No feedback

☐ I did not contact the host

☐ Not applicable

If applicable, please describe the type of feedback or support you received:

_____

_____

3.3.5. Evaluation Criteria

How clear were the evaluation criteria for the TNA application?

☐ Very clear

☐ Somewhat clear

☐ Neutral

☐ Somewhat unclear

☐ Very unclear

Comments on the evaluation process or selection criteria:

_____

_____

3.3.6. Suggestions for Improvement

Do you have any suggestions to improve the TNA application process or related support materials?

_____

_____

3.4 RI TNA execution

Was the project successful?

☐ Yes

☐ Partially

☐ No

Was the supervision by the host institute adequate?

☐ Yes

☐ Partially

☐ No

Were the available resources at the host institute adequate for your project?

☐ Yes

☐ Partially

☐ No

What was the duration of the project (in months)?

_____ months

Were the available funds sufficient to carry out the planned activities?

☐ Yes

☐ Partially

☐ No

3.4.1 Project Results

Did the project produce results?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what was the output of the project? (Select all that apply)

☐ Data

☐ Biological material

☐ Acquired expertise

If the project produced data or biological material, how is it made available?

☐ Private (not shared)

☐ Public (openly accessible)

☐ Restricted (please indicate the conditions that apply for use):

_____

_____

3.4.2. Reporting and Feedback

In your opinion, what is a reasonable time (in months) between the end of the project and time for submitting the final report?

_____ months

3.4.3. Factors Influencing Infrastructure Choice

Please score how each of the following factors influenced your choice of infrastructure (1 = Very low influence, 10 = Very high influence):

☐ Scientific expertise of the host

☐ Availability of specific equipment/facilities

☐ Reputation of the host institution

☐ Prior collaboration with the host

☐ Location / travel logistics

☐ Expected support during the project

☐ Funding coverage

☐ Previous user feedback or references

☐ Availability within the required timeframe

☐ Other (please specify below)

Please specify the 'Other' factor (if any):

_____

_____

3.4.4 Suggestions for Improvement

Do you have any suggestions to improve the execution or support of TNA projects within EUROFAANG?

_____

_____

3.5 Networking and collaborations

How important was it for you to develop your research network through or via the research infrastructure?

☐ Not at all important (1)
☐ Slightly important (2)
☐ Moderately important (3)
☐ Very important (4)
☐ Extremely important (5)

Did the TNA project contribute to the development of new research collaborations?

☐ Yes, significantly
☐ Yes, to some extent
☐ No new collaborations emerged
☐ Not applicable

Have you remained in contact with researchers or staff at the host infrastructure since the project?

☐ Yes, frequent collaboration
☐ Yes, occasional contact
☐ No, not anymore
☐ Not applicable

Do you anticipate future collaborations or follow-up projects stemming from your TNA access?

☐ Yes
☐ Possibly
☐ No
☐ Not sure yet

Please describe briefly any notable collaborative outcomes or connections made during your TNA experience (optional):

3.6 RI techniques used during TNA visit

Please indicate which of the following techniques or methods were used during your TNA project. You may select more than one. For each selected technique, you can optionally indicate whether this involved training, data generation, sample processing, or analysis.

Category	Technique/Method	Used?	Training	Data Generation	Sample Processing	Analysis
Genomics	Whole genome sequencing (WGS)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Whole exome sequencing (WES)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Genotyping arrays / SNP chips	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Structural variant analysis	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transcriptomics	RNA sequencing (bulk)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Single-cell RNA-seq	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	qPCR / RT-PCR	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Epigenomics	ATAC-seq / DNA accessibility profiling	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	ChIP-seq / histone modification analysis	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	DNA methylation profiling (e.g., bisulfite sequencing)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Proteomics	Mass spectrometry-based proteomics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Western blot / ELISA	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Metabolomics	Targeted / untargeted metabolomics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Phenotyping	Animal-based phenotyping (e.g., growth, health, production)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	High-throughput imaging or sensor-based phenotyping	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Behavioural assessment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cell Biology	Use of primary cells or tissues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Cell culture or immortalized cell lines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Organoids or 3D models	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Bioinformatics	Data processing pipelines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Genome annotation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Multi-omics integration	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other	Please specify: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Were you introduced to a new method or technique during the visit that you had not used before?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please specify: _____

Will you apply any of the techniques learned during the TNA project in your future research?

☐ Yes

☐ Possibly

☐ No

3.7 Additional remarks

Please provide any additional remarks about your TNA visit if needed:

……

3.8 If it was a training, course or workshop:

How was the course organised in terms of knowledge?

☐ High knowledge level

☐ Sufficient knowledge level

☐ Knowledge level could have been improved

What do you suggest could be improved?

_____

_____

Was the expected previous knowledge sufficiently clarified in the TNA application form?

☐ Yes
☐ Possibly
☐ No

How was the technical organization (in terms of Teams, zoom) if presenters or other course participants were joining online?

☐ Good

☐ Sufficient

☐ Poor

4. Conclusions

This survey provides a comprehensive overview of the Transnational Access (TNA) experience within the EUROFAANG consortium. The responses will help us better understand how accessible and transparent the application process is, how effectively projects are supported at host institutions, and whether the infrastructure and resources provided align with the needs of visiting researchers, students, academics or training courses and workshops. In addition, the survey evaluates the scientific and collaborative impact of the TNA visits, including the use of advanced techniques, data generation, and the acquisition of new expertise. By assessing the role of TNA in facilitating knowledge exchange and strengthening research networks, the survey also highlights the value of cross-border cooperation in functional genomics especially linked to farm animals. We believe this survey will support the consortium's broader goal of advancing the functional annotation of animal genomes and enhancing the scientific capacity and connectivity of the European livestock genomics community.