RLASB ACCES PROTOCOL

The High Biological Safety Laboratories Network (*Red de Laboratorios de Alta Seguridad Biológica*, RLASB) is a Spanish Singular Scientific and Technical Infrastructure (ICTS) comprising high biological safety laboratories that offer integrated laboratory and animal facility services, exclusively dedicated to working with infectious agents that require high biological safety conditions for their handling.

RLASB is a distributed ICTS infrastructure comprising two nodes: the high biological safety (BSL-3) laboratories at the Animal Health Research Centre (*Centro de investigación en Sanidad Animal*) INIA-CISA) and the high biological safety (BSL-3) laboratories at the Animal Health Research Centre (*Centre de Recerca en Sanitat Animal*) IRTA-CReSA.

1. USER REQUIREMENTS

Before accessing the facility, all users must complete the specific biocontainment and biosafety training courses organised by the scientific facility. This training is required to ensure compliance with the strict regulations governing activities in BSL-3 laboratories.

2. GENERAL ACCESS PROCEDURE

RLASB offers access to its services and infrastructures to all interested national and international users who may come either from the public or the private sector, and who can apply to them under the “Competitive Open Access” or “Access on demand” modalities.

- **Competitive open access calls** are held twice a year and are published sufficiently in advance to allow time for the selection of access applications and the planning of the operational period.

- **On-demand access** may be requested at any time by following the relevant procedures available on the RLASB website.

2.1. Application form and required documentation for the Open Access procedure

Researchers or research groups wishing to obtain access to the RLASB must apply using the corresponding RLASB Open Access Form. The applicant's curriculum vitae (CV) must be submitted in English and in PDF format together with the Access Application Form. The same user may submit more than one application. However, each application will be assessed independently.

The Access Application Form and all supporting documentation must be submitted through the Access Application Platform.

For projects led by external institutions in which IRTA-CReSA or INIA-CISA participates, the application must be submitted by a member of the IRTA-CReSA or INIA-CISA staff who is responsible for coordinating, supervising or carrying out the work or activities to be performed at the facility.

Upon receipt of an access application, the RLASB Access Committee may contact the applicant at any time to request additional information or clarification regarding the information provided.

2.2. Evaluation and selection of applications

Access applications will be evaluated and selected through an assessment procedure carried out by the RLASB Expert Committee. The members of the RLASB Expert Committee are:

- **Fayna Díaz San Segundo,** veterinarian and researcher at Viral Immunologist National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) at New York.
- **Gustavo Domínguez Bernal**, Professor of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

- **Lluís Luján Lerma**, Professor of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the Universidad de Zaragoza

2.3. Selection criteria

Firstly, the RLABS Coordination Committee will evaluate the viability of the proposals taking into consideration the technical characteristics of each node and the proposal's requirements. The viable proposals will be transferred to the Expert Committee to be scientifically evaluated. After scientific criteria are applied and scored, the Expert Committee prioritizes access requests according to the public and transparent evaluation procedure detailed in the Access Protocol and the Open Access Calls.

The **members of the RLASB Coordination Committee** are:

- **Noemí Sevilla Hidalgo**, Director of CISA-INIA-CSIC
- **Javier Ortego Alonso**, Scientific Deputy Director of CISA-INIA-CSIC
- **Lara del Río Fernández**, Technical Deputy Director of CISA-INIA-CSIC
- **Cristina Jurado Díaz**, Head of the Animal Facility Section at CISA-INIA-CSIC
- **Natàlia Majó Masferrer**, Head of the IRTA Animal Health Programme
- **Sergio López Soria**, Deputy Head of the IRTA Animal Health Programme
- **Xavier Abad Morejon de Girón**, Head of the IRTA-CReSA Biocontainment Unit
- **Guillermo Cantero Portillo**, Head of Animal Experimentation and Welfare at IRTA-CReSA

Assessment criteria will be applied.

- **Technical criteria** (viable /non-viable)
    - Justification for the need to access the RLASB facilities to develop the proposal.
    - Suitability of the facilities, equipment and/or techniques requested (*e.g.* authorized species, sample size, pathogen of interest, etc.).
    - Time necessary to develop the work plan.
    - Experience of applicants and their teams.

Not viable proposals will be rejected at this point and no further assessment will be conducted.

- **Scientific criteria** (10 points)
    - Quality, relevance and impact of proposal (7.50 point). The access request must include the code and title of the associated project.
    - Scientific background of the applicant or research team (2.50 points).

For the selection of proposals, an ordered list of accepted competitive accesses will be drawn up according to the obtained final score. In order to maximize the number of research groups to which access is granted, priority will be given to different groups before granting several accesses to the same group. Other proposals could be re-classified as On Demand Accesses if they did not meet the requirements for Open Access Calls.

2.4. Decision, notification and appeals

Decisions to grant or deny access will be issued within a maximum period of one month from the closing date of the call and will be communicated directly to applicants via the email address provided. The notification will include information on the available appeals and the applicable deadlines.

Applicants will have 15 working days to formally accept or decline the access granted in writing.

3. ACCESS AGREEMENT

The applicable fee for access to the facilities of each node will be the reduced rate.

As part of the access agreement granting access to the RLASB node, each node will establish that the beneficiary must:

- **Submit a report** on the scientific activity carried out during their access to the corresponding RLASB node to the laboratory management, within a maximum period of three months from the end of the access period.
- **Acknowledge the use of RLASB facilities** in any scientific publication resulting from this use.
- **Publish the results** of the research carried out at RLASB research centres through open competitive access.