

ENCODE Project Criteria for Participation

December 9, 2002

The National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) is organizing a new public research consortium named ENCODE, the Encyclopedia of DNA Elements, to carry out a project to identify all functional elements in the human genome sequence.

A pilot project for testing and comparing existing and new methods to accomplish this goal is the first phase of the ENCODE project. Working together in a highly cooperative effort to rigorously analyze a defined portion of the human genome sequence, investigators with diverse backgrounds and expertise will evaluate the relative merits of each of a diverse set of techniques, technologies and strategies with the goal of identifying a package of approaches that will allow the comprehensive identification of all the functional elements in the human genome sequence. Through the ENCODE pilot, we expect to identify gaps in our ability to annotate genomic sequence and to assess the abilities of different approaches to be scaled up for an effort to analyze the entire human genome.

This process will involve close interactions between computational and experimental scientists to evaluate all possible methods. A set of regions representing approximately 1 percent of the human genome has been selected as the target for this pilot project. By initially concentrating on a limited portion of the human genome, the NHGRI hopes that all of those who have experience and insight into the problem will be willing to participate, whether or not their approaches are proprietary or have already generated proprietary data. The ENCODE consortium will be open to all academic, government and private sector scientists interested in participating in an open process to facilitate the comprehensive interpretation of the human genome sequence and who agree to the criteria for participation that is described below. In this way, the activities of the ENCODE consortium could be influential in helping to guide the planning for a complete public elucidation of functional elements within the entire human genome.

Criteria for participation in the ENCODE consortium are:

1. Each participant will inform the NHGRI and the ENCODE consortium members about their group's experimental plans.
2. Each participant agrees to analyze the entire set of selected regions and not just a subset of the target sequences. A research group composed of several individuals with a shared experimental approach can be formed, with each individual examining a part of the target sequences, provided that the group as a whole will gather data on the entire set of target regions and that the leader of the group will take responsibility for this.

3. Each participant is expected to contribute significantly to the project, bringing his/her particular expertise to accomplish the goals of the consortium in a timely manner. Participation in the consortium should consist of more than deposition of data to the shared database, and should include substantial intellectual contributions to the project.
4. All members of the consortium will share results according to the data sharing policy developed by the NHGRI for this project.
5. All members of the consortium agree to participate in group activities, including attending periodic workshops to discuss the project's progress and coordinating the publication of research results.
6. The participants will fully disclose all publicly funded algorithms, software source code, and experimental methods to the other members of the consortium for purposes of scientific evaluation and are strongly encouraged to disseminate this information to the broad scientific community.
7. The participants agree that they will not disclose confidential information obtained from other members of the consortium.
8. The NHGRI, with the advice of the project's Advisory Committee, will approve of participants for involvement in the consortium.
9. Additional criteria may be added upon recommendations of the Advisory Committee.