



CEBIB and Earlham Institute (Norwich, UK) discuss collaborative opportunities

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On Wednesday February 8, 2017, distinguished guests from [Earlham Institute \(EI\)](#) [8], Norwich - United Kingdom visited CEBIB. The guests, namely; [Prof. Neil Hall](#) [9](Director, EI), [Prof. Anthony Hall](#) [10] (Head of Genomics, EI), and [Dr. Robert Davey](#) [11] (Data Infrastructure Group Leader, EI) were hosted by [Dr. George Obiero](#) [12](Director, CEBIB), Dr. Rosaline Macharia(Lecturer, CEBIB) and Collins Owino (Graduate Assistant, CEBIB).

The team from EI and CEBIB deliberated on exploring potential collaborative opportunities. They identified various gaps such as deficit in Bioinformaticians and/or biologists, inadequate infrastructure for bioinformatics and challenges of funding for research. The visit strategically targeted joint application of [Global Challenges Research Fund – GCRF](#) [13] (£1.5billion) recently announced by the UK government (Research Councils, UK). GCRF aims at financing innovative research that addresses challenges facing developing countries.

The team emphasised on the need for capacity building and infrastructural support for researchers both in Kenya and the region. In addition to the sequencing facilities hosted at ICRAF and BecA-ILRI, establishment of a cloud computing and national High Performance Computing (HPC) situated in Nairobi will promote cutting-edge research by Kenyan and regional research community.

This infrastructure will address the big gap in Data Analysis associated with inadequate



bioinformatics infrastructure. The team envisioned establishment of a shared infrastructure (to minimise on the cost of maintenance and maximize on the user demand) for Big Data Analysis. The visitors made reference of most Universities in the UK which own a shared HPC infrastructure. In addition to these, the European Bioinformatics Institute (EBI) provides a centralized support for the UK research community. There is need for Kenyan research institutions to address the exponential growth of data (both locally and in the region) compared to the available computing power.

The team proposed to explore collaborative trainings (including plans to offer short-course in CEBIB such as Software Carpentry to be facilitated by Dr. Robert Davey), partnering to offer short-term fellowship and establishing a Kenya-UK student exchange programme.

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