

How do I request specimens from the ACSR?

LOIs that are completed in accordance with the requirements described below, will be submitted for independent scientific review. Confirmation of receipt and submission of the LOI for scientific review will be documented via email which will include an LOI tracking number to be referenced in all future correspondence.

LOIs that do not meet the requirements *e.g.*, are incomplete, incorrectly completed, or for which requested samples are unavailable, will be returned to the investigator for modification before submission for scientific review. In the case where an LOI is returned for modification, an ACSR PI may be assigned to work with an investigator to assist in the LOI completion process.

1. Investigators are encouraged to submit an inquiry specifying the specimen/sample type, the quantity/volume of material *e.g.*, thickness of FFPE tissue and number of slides, the array/technology/sample analysis method to test project aims, whether the samples will be used for assay development or other early-stage testing, required sample annotation, and any other details that will assist us in identifying the ideal samples for your use. Inquiries should be submitted to the ACSR via email contact@acsr1.com.
2. Following an inquiry, the ACSR will work with the investigator to verify the availability of the requested biospecimens and further assist the investigator through the LOI process including assistance in identifying an Africa collaborator for requests of >20 samples from our Sub-Saharan African Biorepository (SSAB) at Stellenbosch University or obtaining samples from our regional biospecimen repository at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil.
3. Once the ACSR confirms availability of biospecimen types, quantity and other details, the investigator will be directed to submit an LOI. The LOI forms include specific instructions/sections for completion to provide sufficient detail for assessment and fulfillment of the proposed research plan including detailed information regarding the requested samples such as the number and type of biospecimens. If the ACSR is not able to supplement the investigator's needs, every effort will be made to identify an appropriate resource.
 - A. **Feasibility (Short) Form** LOI is designed for pilot studies and limits the number of biospecimens that are needed, for example, for test development, quality control, and/or preliminary research. The Short Form LOI allows a researcher to request 20 or fewer biospecimens on a **one-time basis** for a specific hypothesis/project.
 - B. **Standard Form** LOI is used for all other requests including follow-up requests of <=20 samples to test the same/similar hypothesis.
4. The LOI is submitted to the ACSR and then forwarded to and reviewed by an independent Research Evaluation and Decision Panel (REDP) composed of relevant scientific experts. For Standard LOIs, a priority score is attached and forwarded to the ACSR to present to the ACSR Executive Committee.
 - A. Factors influencing LOI priority scores are:
 - I. Scientific merit (innovative, novel, appropriate methods for sample type(s) and technology) of the application
 - II. Experience of the investigator
 - III. Appropriate statistical analysis/methodology
 - IV. Statistical justification of sample size requested to accomplish the study.
5. The ACSR Executive Committee (EC) makes the final decision on approving the request for biospecimens and associated data.
6. Upon completion of the review by the REDP and ACSR EC, an ACSR representative(s) will be assigned to assist with the distribution of biospecimens or where scientific issues have been raised by the REDP, an ACSR PI will be assigned to work with the investigator to help determine whether/how the concerns can be addressed to move the research forward.
7. Once approved, an official letter of commitment from the ACSR to provide the necessary biospecimens is sent to the investigator along with a draft Material Transfer/Data Use Agreement.
8. Investigators must provide evidence of IRB approval or exemption before biospecimens are distributed.

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As a beneficiary of funding from the National Cancer Institute, we require specimen recipients to acknowledge the contribution of the ACSR in all presentations, publications, grants and patents resulting from the use of our specimens. Investigators are encouraged to use the recommended wording: ***Specimens were provided by AIDS and Cancer Specimen Resource, funded by the National Cancer Institute.***

You may also complete the [contact form](#) if you require assistance or wish for the ACSR to contact you.