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## MAX-INF2: European Macromolecular Crystallography Infrastructure Network

Every important process in a living cell is governed by the structures and dynamics of the macromolecules that participate in it. Understanding the structures of macromolecular systems is therefore of prime importance to biological and medical research. Macromolecular crystallography (MX) is a rapidly expanding discipline which is playing a vital role in determining the structures of biological molecules. With the help of EU funding, MAX-INF2 seeks to reinforce this area of European research through networking and coordination.

### ● CRYSTAL CLEAR

For scientists, being able to determine the crystal structure of a molecule is like finding another piece of the puzzle – it allows them a greater insight into how molecular systems function and fit together. This is made possible by macromolecular crystallography (MX) which has become a significant component of European biological and medical research programmes.

Structural genomics – the high-throughput determination of crystal structures of biological macromolecules – could significantly enhance our understanding of the functioning of

biological organisms. The large number of structural genomics projects currently in operation worldwide is a clear sign of the interest in, and importance of, structural biology, in particular MX.

The EU project MAX-INF2 brings together large-scale synchrotron radiation facilities, hardware and software developers, as well as academic and commercial users, to promote co-operation and to act as a focus for research groups and individuals moving into this area of research.

### ● A FOCUS FOR COORDINATION

MAX-INF2 aims to coordinate research efforts in European laboratories involved in developing methods for MX by enhancing communication and interactions between the European synchrotrons that provide facilities for data collection and the laboratories involved in hardware and software technologies development.

With the number of structural research facilities growing, better coordination of the software available at those sites – the user interfaces for data acquisition and on-line analysis of crystal structures – is necessary. The overriding goal is to help build a more cohesive user-friendly research environment, which will improve access to structural research infrastructures for the MX community as a whole.

## ● EUROPEAN MACROMOLECULAR CRYSTALLOGRAPHY INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK IN SUMMARY

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**Project acronym:** MAX-INF2

**Funding scheme (FP6):** Coordination Action (CA)

**EU financial contribution:** €720 000

**EU project officer:** Maria Douka

**Duration:** 60 months

**Start date:** 1 December 2004

**Completion date:** 31 November 2009

**Project webpage:** <http://www.ccp4.ac.uk/maxinf/>

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