

# Data storage, protection and management for the Life Science community

M. A. Tangaro, G. Donvito, F. Zambelli  
CNR-IBIOM and INFN-Bari



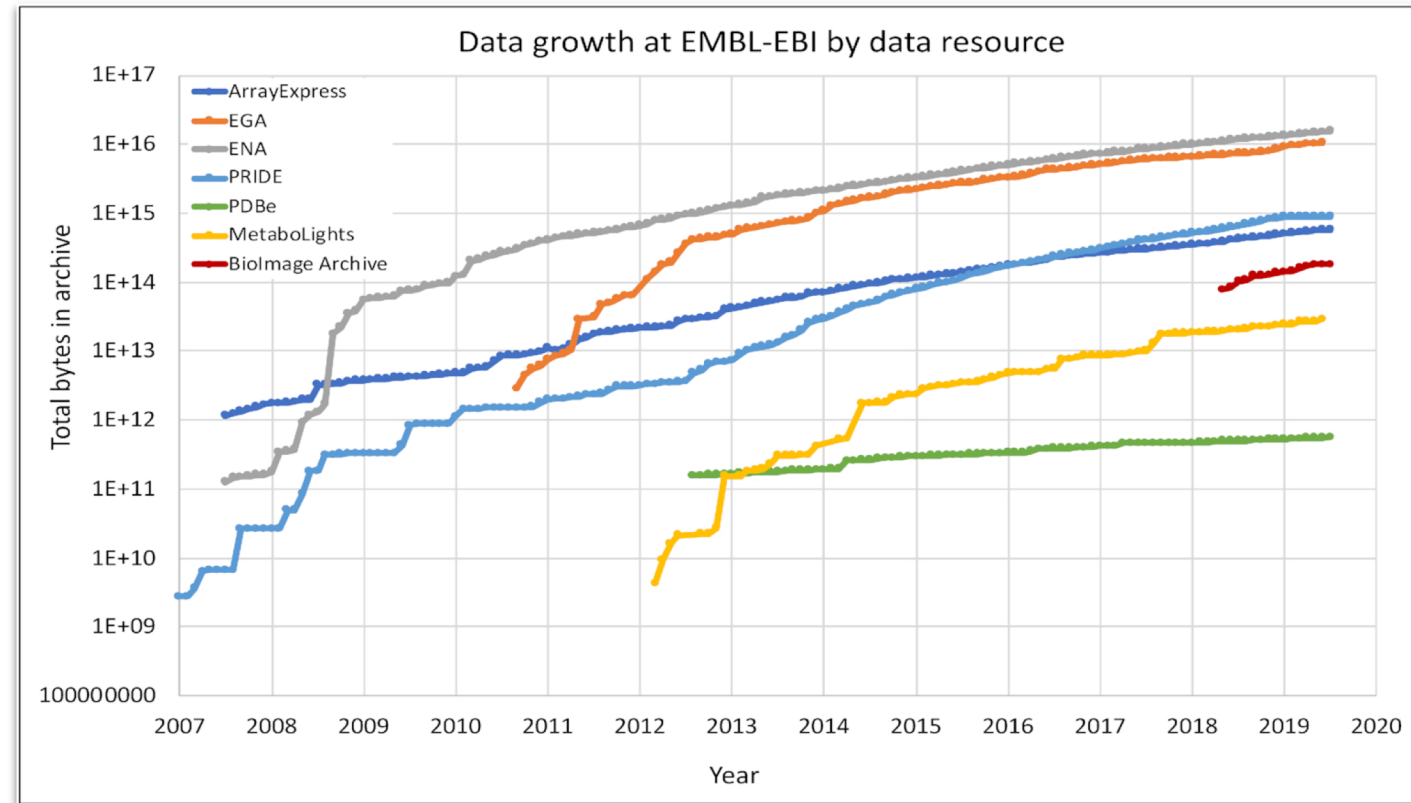
**NET  
MAKERS**



# Data in Life Science

Data volume is doubling every six months.

Not only in quantity but also in variety.

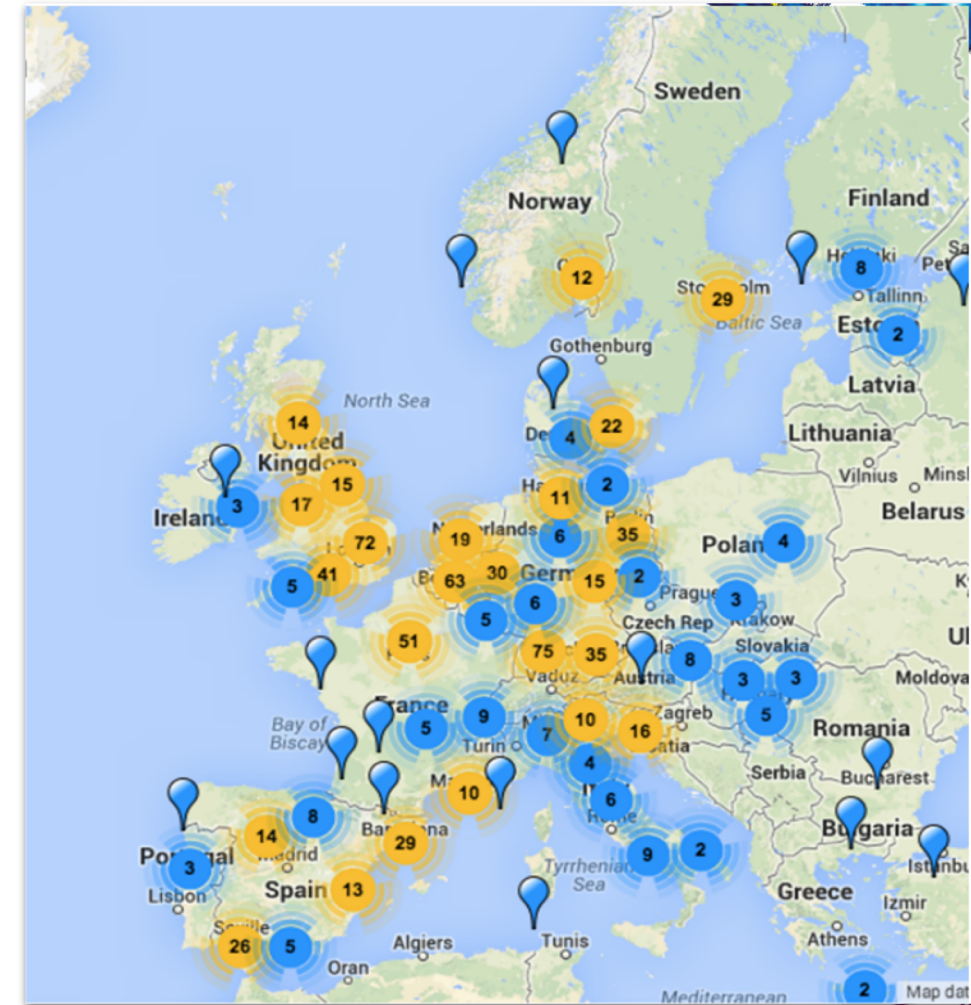


Data growth at EMBL-EBI Source: Charles E. Cook et al. Nucl. Acids Res. 2020; Volume 48, Issue D1, Pages D17-D23

# Data in Life Science

Genomic data are distributed across several sequencing centres and/or IT infrastructures.

Discipline	Data size	# devices
HEP-LHC	15PB/year	1
Astronomy	15PB/year	1
Genomics	0.4TB/genome	>1000



# Data in Life Science

The GDPR explicitly recognizes the sensitive nature of the collected genetic data (Article 9), but at the same time permits sensitive genetic data processing for scientific research purposes (Article 89(1)) without explicit consent, provided this is allowed by EU or Member States law framework and appropriate safeguards measures are in place.





# Outline

Different use cases for number of users, resource location and data sensitivity

Many users  
Different research domain  
Distributed resources

**The Pulsar Network:**  
distributed compute and storage across Europe

**Sensitive data:**  
the European Genome-phenome Archive

**Data Encryption on-demand:**  
the Laniakea use case

**A “simple” use case:**  
CNR.BiOmics sequencing facility

Few users  
dedicated resources

The CNR.BiOmics project ("National Research Center in Bioinformatics for Omics Sciences", PIR01\_00017 14.5 M€ and CIR01\_00017 2M€), currently on-going, which aims to strengthen the Italian node of the European Research Infrastructure ELIXIR in the southern regions.



10X Genomics



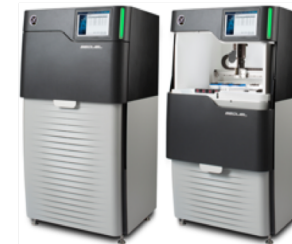
Illumina NovaSeq 6000



Oxford Nanopore GridION



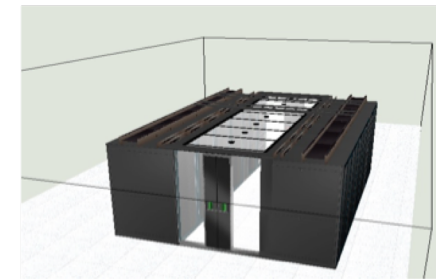
PacBio Sequel



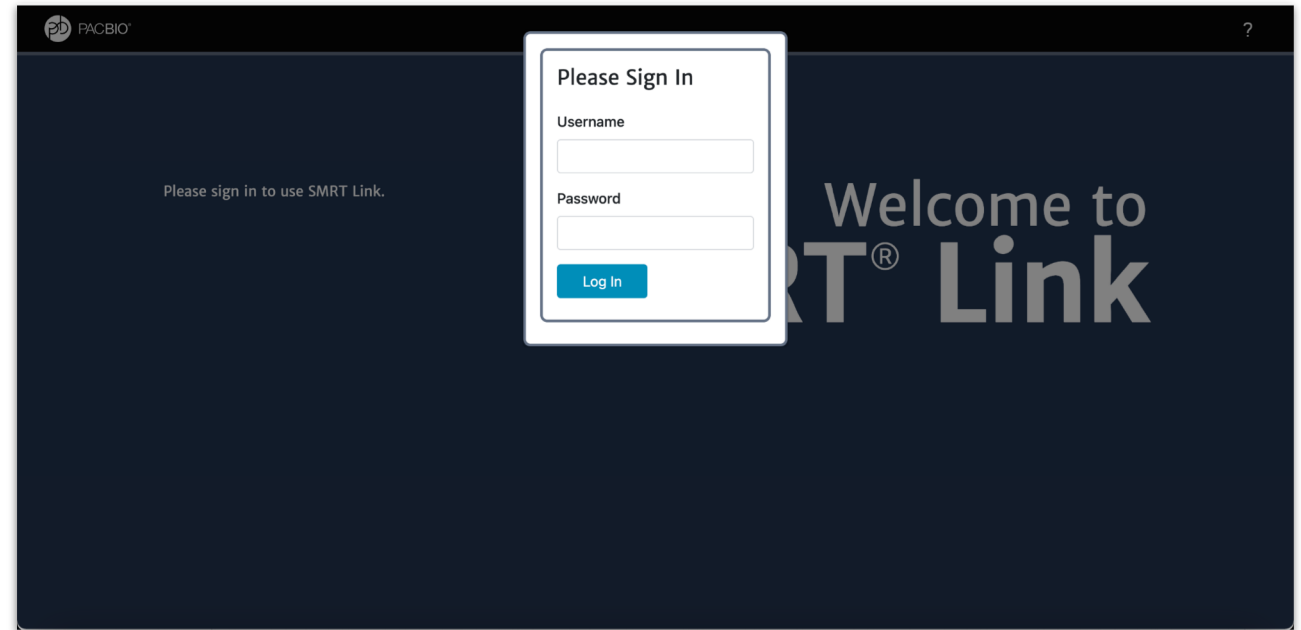
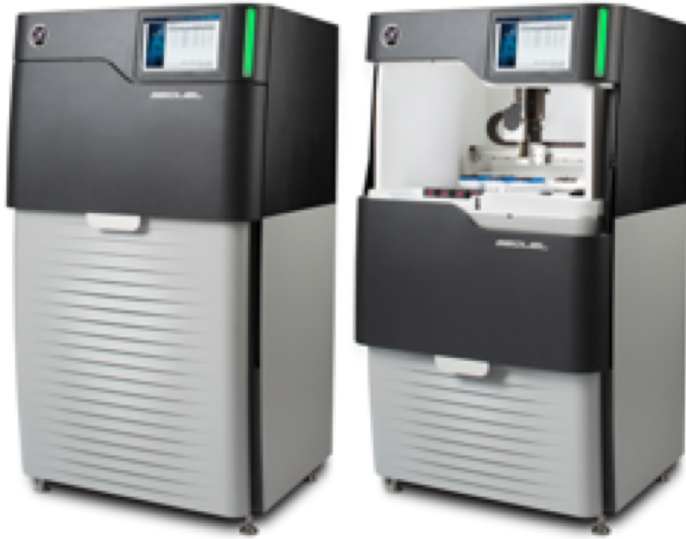
Orbitrap Fusion



BioNano Genomics



ICT Facility  
10K core – 15 Pb



## PacBio Sequel2:

- 2-3 TB output per sample
- 4 sample per run
- 1 run per week.

The sequencing facility is housed at IBIOM-CNR (Bari)

The analysis facility is housed at ReCaS-Bari datacenter.

Data are moved from the PacBio to the analysis server, where PacBio SMRT-Link have been configured for analysis.

70 TB Lustre storage are currently supporting the config.

<https://laniakea-elixir-it.github.io>

LANIAKEA is a cloud based Galaxy instance provider.

## Developed by ELIXIR-ITALY

By hiding the technical complexity behind a user-friendly web front-end, Laniakea allows its users to configure and deploy virtual Galaxy instances with a handful of clicks.

**No need for the end user to know the underlying infrastructure.**

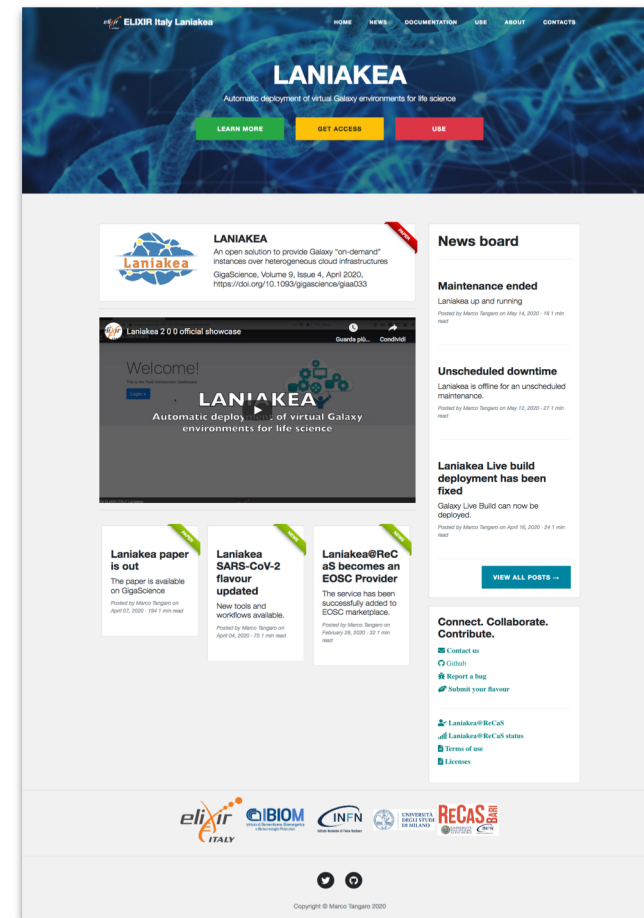
**No need for maintenance of the hardware and software infrastructure.**



Laniakea paper



Laniakea@ReCaS paper



# Laniakea – Storage encryption on-demand



The user data privacy is granted through LUKS storage encryption as a service: data are isolated from any other instance on the same platform and from the cloud service administrators.

The encryption procedure has been completely automated in order to simplify the user experience: the user can encrypt storage on-demand, using a strong random alphanumerical passphrase.

This has been achieved integrating the key management system Hashicorp Vault ([vaultproject.io](https://vaultproject.io)) to store encryption keys, which are shown in the Laniakea Dashboard only if explicitly requested by the user.





# On-demand encryption: user experience

A screenshot of a web browser showing the "Template: galaxy-vault.yaml" page. The page has a description at the top, followed by fields for "Instance description", "Virtual hardware" (with tabs for "Galaxy" and "Advanced"), "Instance flavour" (set to "Small (1 cpu, 2 GB RAM, 20 GB disk)"), "Galaxy instance SSH public key", and "Storage volume size" (set to "50 GB"). A toggle switch for "Enable encryption" is set to "On". A large orange arrow points to this toggle. At the bottom are "Submit" and "Back" buttons.

Template: galaxy-vault.yaml

Description: Deploy Galaxy on a single Virtual Machine installing it from scratch (SLOW). The basic configuration includes CentOS 7, the selected Galaxy flavour, companion software and reference data. Configure, click on the "Submit" button and wait for the confirmation e-mail(s) with instructions on how to provide your passphrase (if encryption is enabled) and log in to your new Galaxy instance. If after some hours you do not receive any e-mail please be sure to check your SPAM BOX.

Instance description

Virtual hardware

Instance flavour

Small (1 cpu, 2 GB RAM, 20 GB disk)

CPU, memory size (RAM), root disk size

Galaxy instance SSH public key

Paste here your SSH public key

Enable encryption

On

Encrypt storage

Storage volume size

50 GB

Select storage size

Submit Back

A screenshot of the "PaaS Orchestrator Dashboard" showing the "Overview" tab for a specific instance. A modal dialog titled "LUKS passphrase" is open, displaying a random passphrase: "4XTxGXFgN18b1wRWx9C8kheEwPBx1OAdp1leaeWbt". The dialog has "Cancel" and "Copy to clipboard" buttons. Below the dialog, the instance details show "STATUS CREATE\_COMPLETE", "CREATED AT 2019-06-24 15:43:00", "UPDATED AT 2019-06-24 16:16:00", and "DEPLOYED AT provider-RECAS-BARI". A "Retrieve LUKS passphrase" button is visible at the bottom of the instance details.

PaaS Orchestrator Dashboard

Home SLAs Settings

Marco Tangaro

11e99696-e14e-8185-a6d8-024283ff312a

LUKS passphrase

4XTxGXFgN18b1wRWx9C8kheEwPBx1OAdp1leaeWbt

Cancel Copy to clipboard

Back

Description: vault test

Overview Input values Output values Links

STATUS CREATE\_COMPLETE

CREATED AT 2019-06-24 15:43:00

UPDATED AT 2019-06-24 16:16:00

DEPLOYED AT provider-RECAS-BARI

Retrieve LUKS passphrase

The user can enable the storage encryption using a switch toggle in the Instance "Virtual hardware" configuration tab.

The procedure is completely automated. The storage is encrypted and the User can retrieve his random passphrase from the Instance overview page.

# On-demand encryption: the infrastructure



A bash script (now pypi package) is used to encrypt the storage using a random passphrase and then store it on Hashicorp Vault.

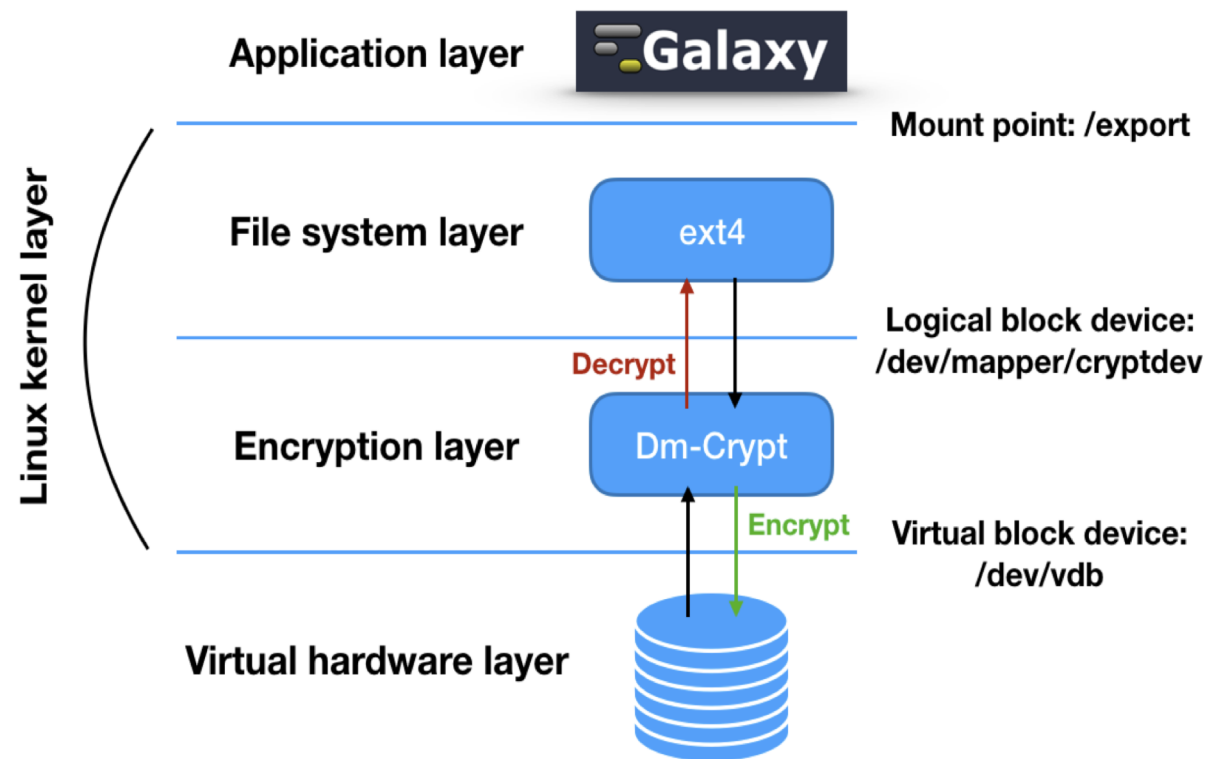
The encryption layer sits between the physical disk and the file system.

Galaxy is unaware of storage encryption.

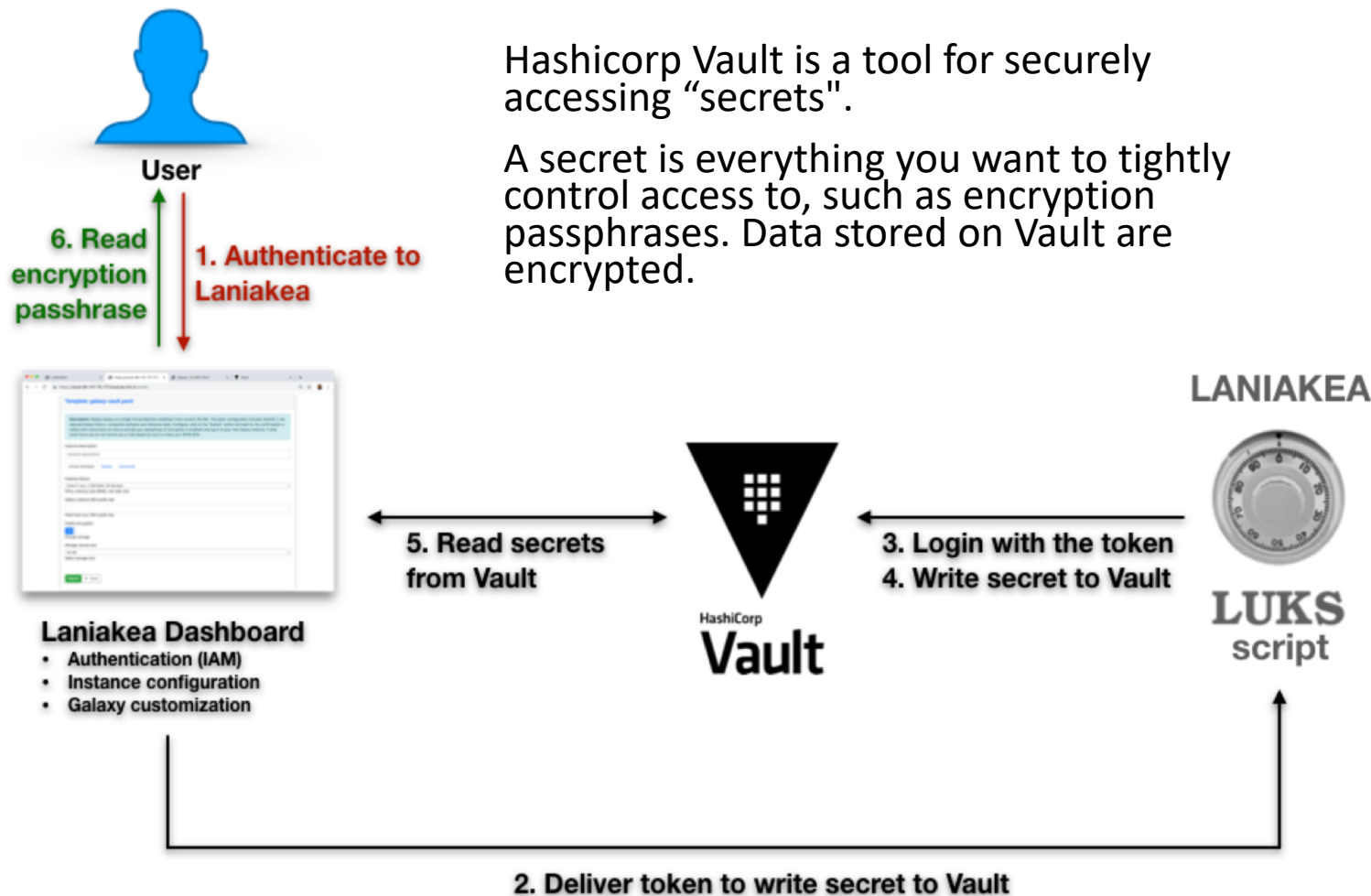
Galaxy exploits a specific mount point in order to store and retrieve files. Files are encrypted when stored to disk and decrypted when read.

Default encryption algorithm:

- aes-xts-plain64 encryption
- 256 bit key
- sha256 as hash algorithm used for key derivation.



# On-demand encryption: the infrastructure



Hashicorp Vault is a tool for securely accessing “secrets”.

A secret is everything you want to tightly control access to, such as encryption passphrases. Data stored on Vault are encrypted.

1. User Authentication.
2. A short lived, write only token, usable only once, is delivered to the Laniakea encryption script on the VM. There's no update policy: this token can't overwrite other passphrases for security reasons.
3. The Storage volume is encrypted by Laniakea LUKS script.
4. The passphrase is sent to Vault by Laniakea LUKS script
5. After the instance has been successfully deployed the user can retrieve his password through the Dashboard.
6. The user reads the password on the Dashboard.

# The European Genome-phenome Archive



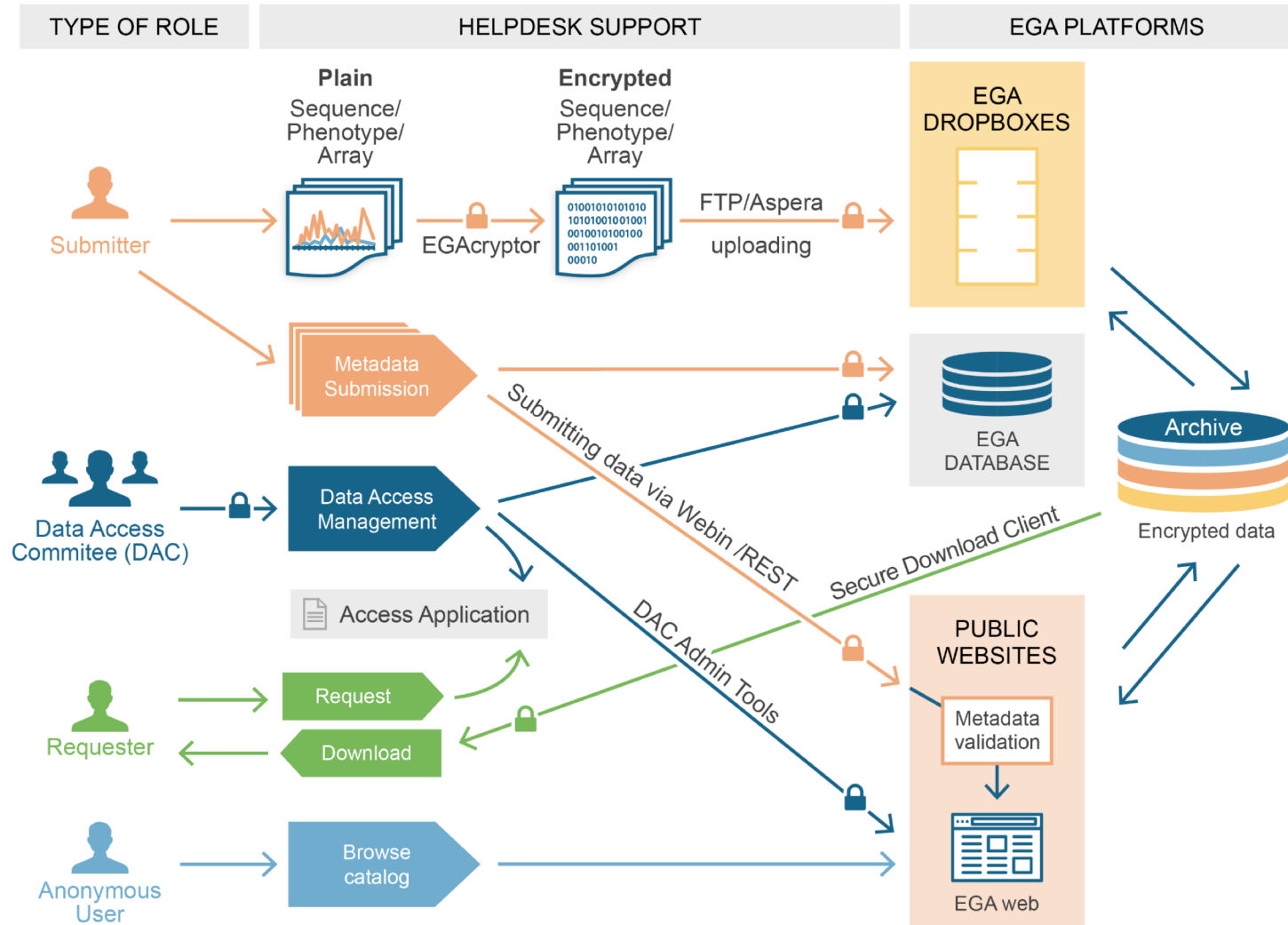
The European Genome-phenome Archive (EGA) is a service for permanent archiving and sharing of all types of personally identifiable genetic and phenotypic data resulting from biomedical research projects.

Data at EGA was collected from individuals whose consent agreements authorise data release only for specific research use to bona fide researchers.

Strict protocols govern how information is managed, stored and distributed by the EGA project.



# The European Genome-phenome Archive



Studies and datasets can be browsed by anonymous users.

Data access committee is responsible for approving access to single or multiple datasets.

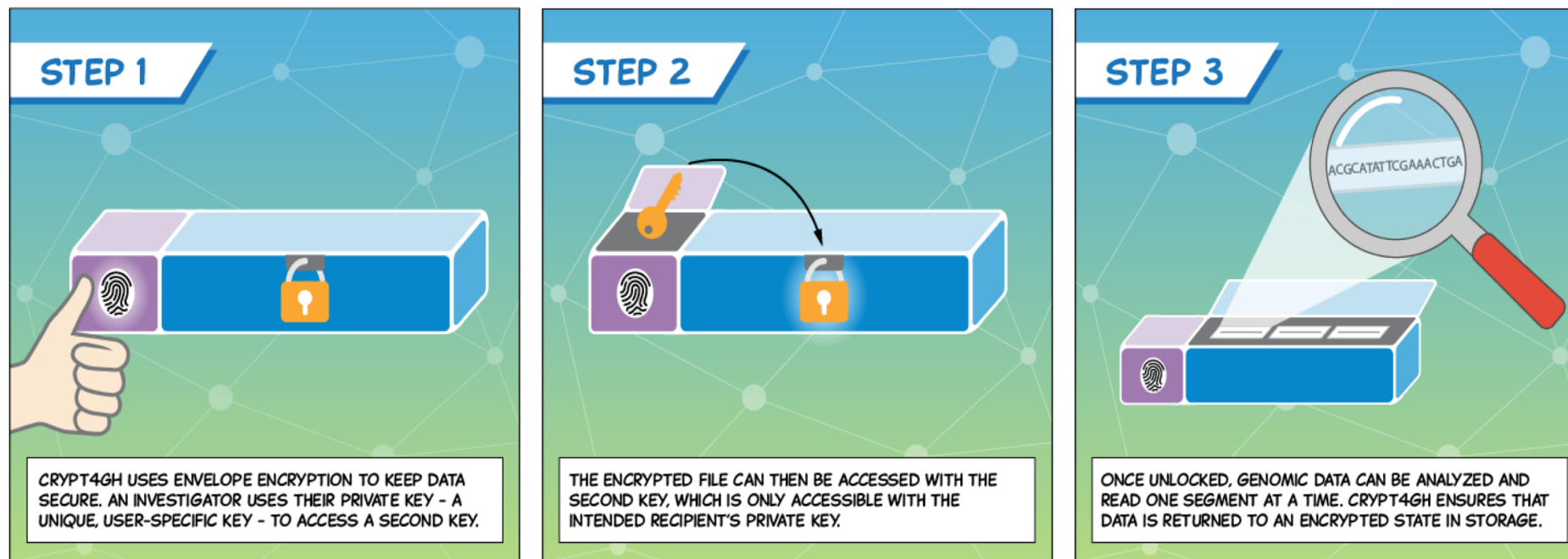
Data are encrypted. Trusted users exploit a user-specific key to decrypt data.



It aims at solving the issue where sensitive data cannot move across borders (cf to GDPR), while public metadata can. Files will be stored encrypted in the Local EGAs located in different countries, while public metadata stays at Central EGA.

1. Submitters upload encrypted files into a Local EGA inbox, located in the relevant country.
2. Encrypted files are moved from to long-term storage, and information are saved in Local EGA database.
3. In the process, each ingested file obtain an Accession ID, which identifies it uniquely across the EGA.
4. The distribution system allows requesters to access securely the encrypted files in the long-term storage, using the accession id, if permissions are granted by a Data Access Committee (DAC).

# The European Genome-phenome Archive



The GA4GH Crypt4GH format:

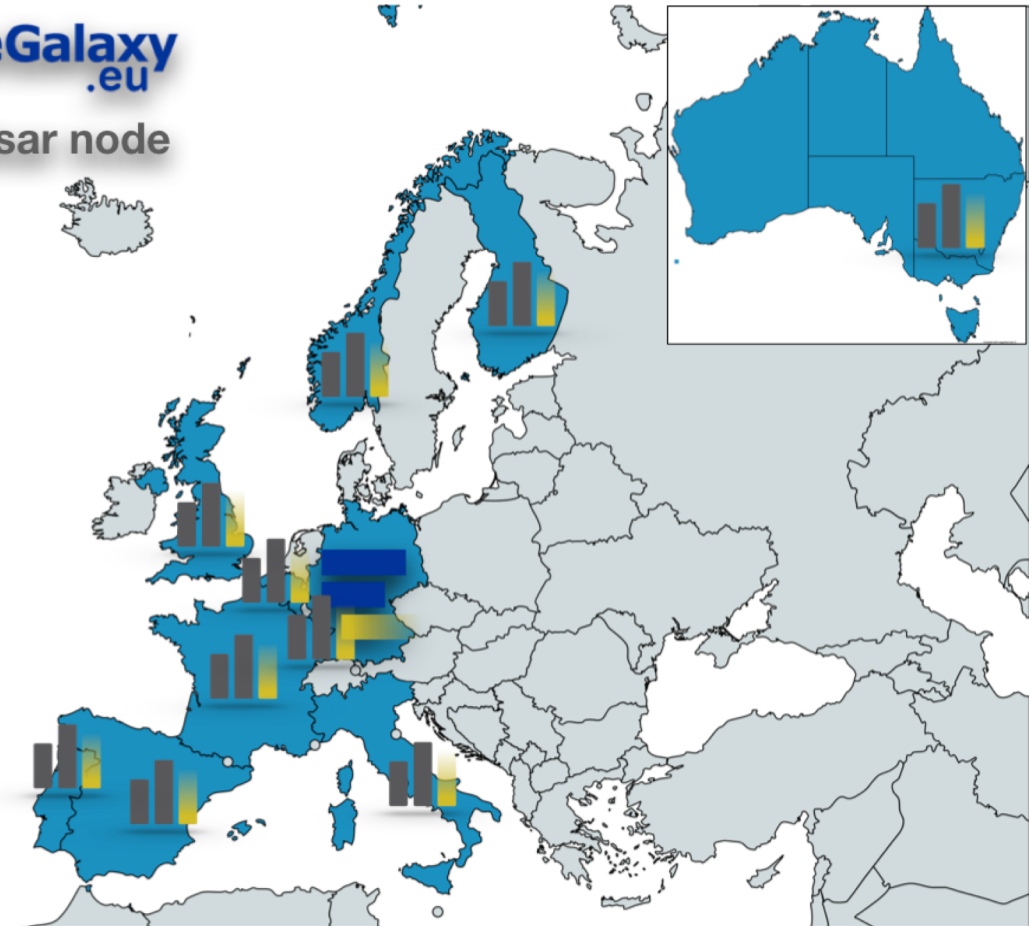
- No re-encryption upon ingestion (only decryption).
- Minimal re-encryption for data distribution.
- Shipping only selected segments for data distribution.

# The European Pulsar Network

The most innovative computing centers across Europe are currently interested to share their remote computation power to support the UseGalaxy.eu load.

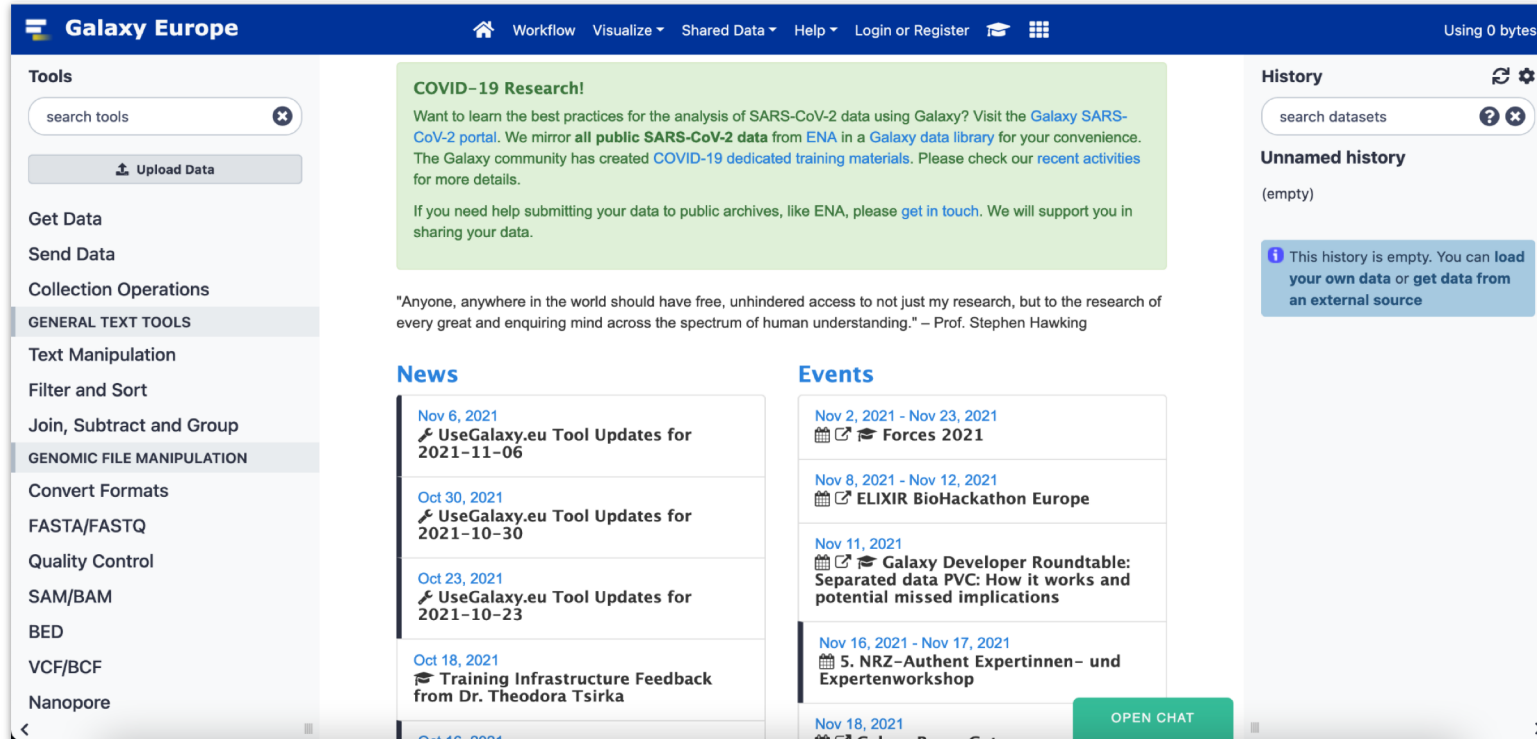
- DE, de.NBI cloud
- **IT, ReCaS-Bari and GARR Cloud**
- BE, Vlaams Supercomputer Centrum (VSC)
- PT, Tecnico ULisboa
- ES, Barcelona Supercomp. Center (INB-BSC )
- NO, University of Bergen
- CZ, CESNET
- FI, CSC
- UK, Diamond Light Source
- FR, GenOuest

<https://pulsar-network.readthedocs.io/>



# The European Pulsar Network

## The Galaxy front-end



Galaxy is an **open**, web-based platform for **accessible**, **reproducible**, and **transparent** computational biomedical research.

# The European Pulsar Network



Pulsar allows a Galaxy server to automatically interact with remote systems, ensuring job and provenance information are correctly exchanged.

- Compute: submits and manages jobs.
- Data: stages user data.

**Data needs to be moved from Galaxy to the remote compute nodes, impacting negatively on the job's execution time in case of large amounts of data.**



Provides reference data and Galaxy dependencies (read only).



# The Cern-VM FileSystem

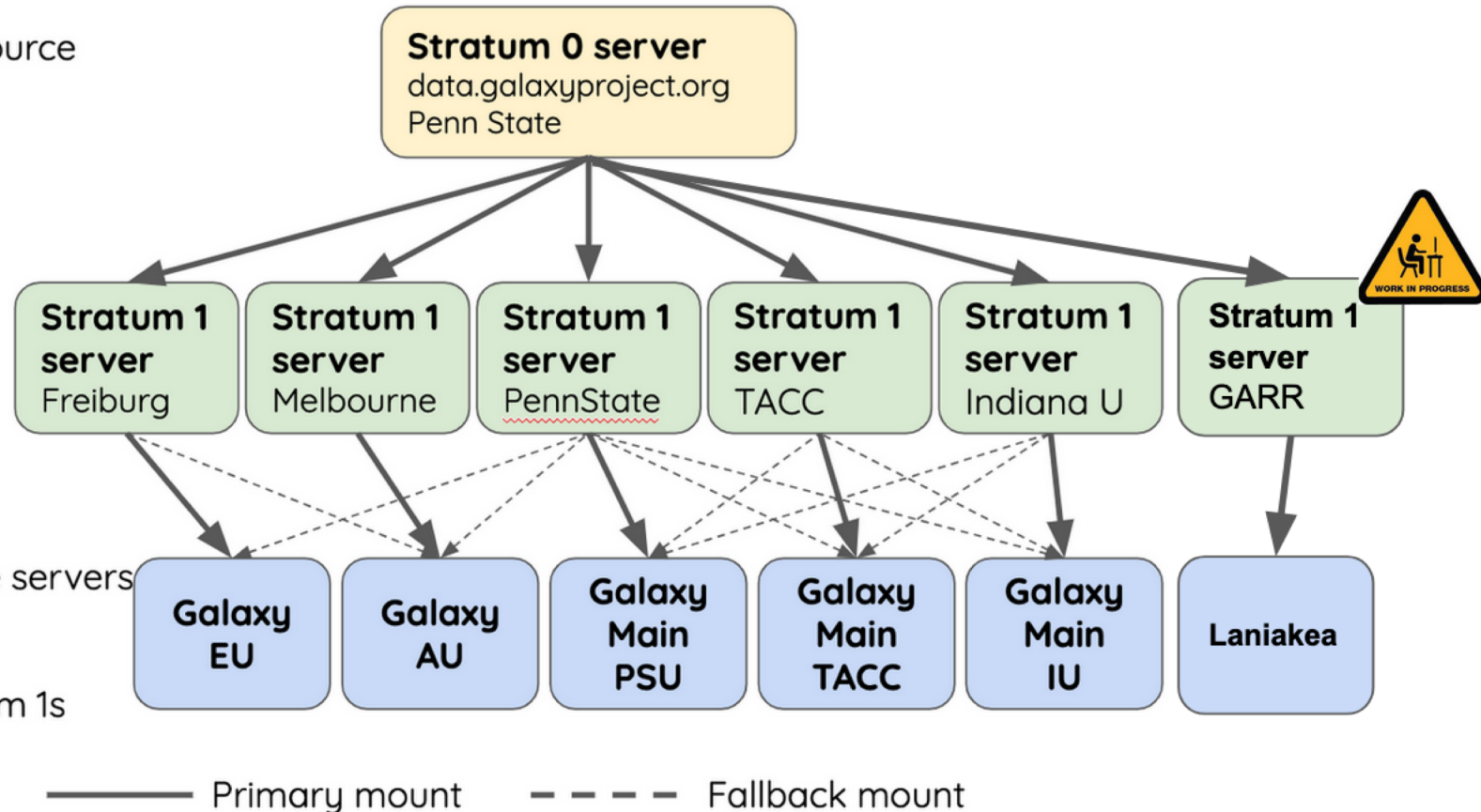
- Needed a method of sharing reference data, e.g. genomic sequences, across countries efficiently
- **CVMFS** is an efficient method for read only data sharing between systems
  - Originally designed for distributed software installation at CERN
  - Turns out it's really useful for read only data sets as well
  - HTTP-based, firewall friendly
- All nodes of Galaxy Main get their reference genomes and indices from CVMFS
  - Shared via mirroring and caching across the country
- It's also really useful to share data **globally**
  - The **usegalaxy.\*** and **Laniakea** initiatives has taken full advantage of this.

# The Cern-VM FileSystem

**Stratum 0:** The canonical source  
Transactional updates

**Stratum 1:** Multiple servers  
Mirrors Stratum 0 server  
Continuous updates

**User servers:** Many multiple servers  
Mounts repo from stratum 1  
Based on GEO-API  
With fallback to other stratum 1s



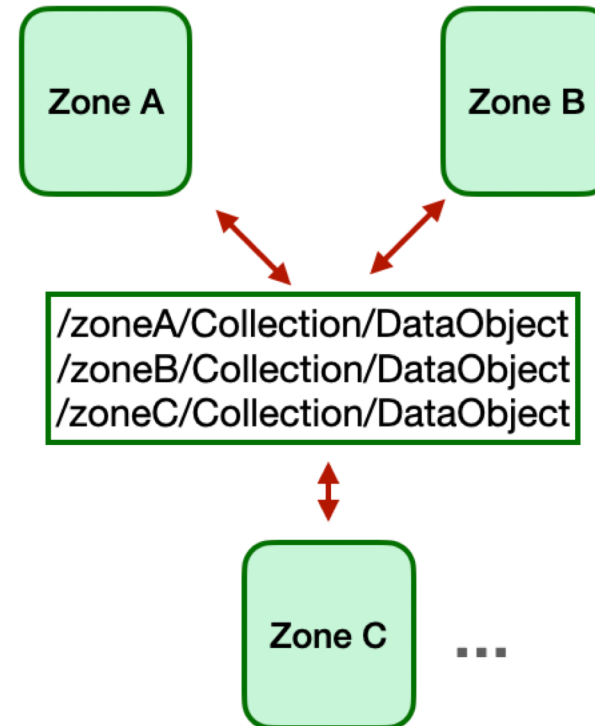
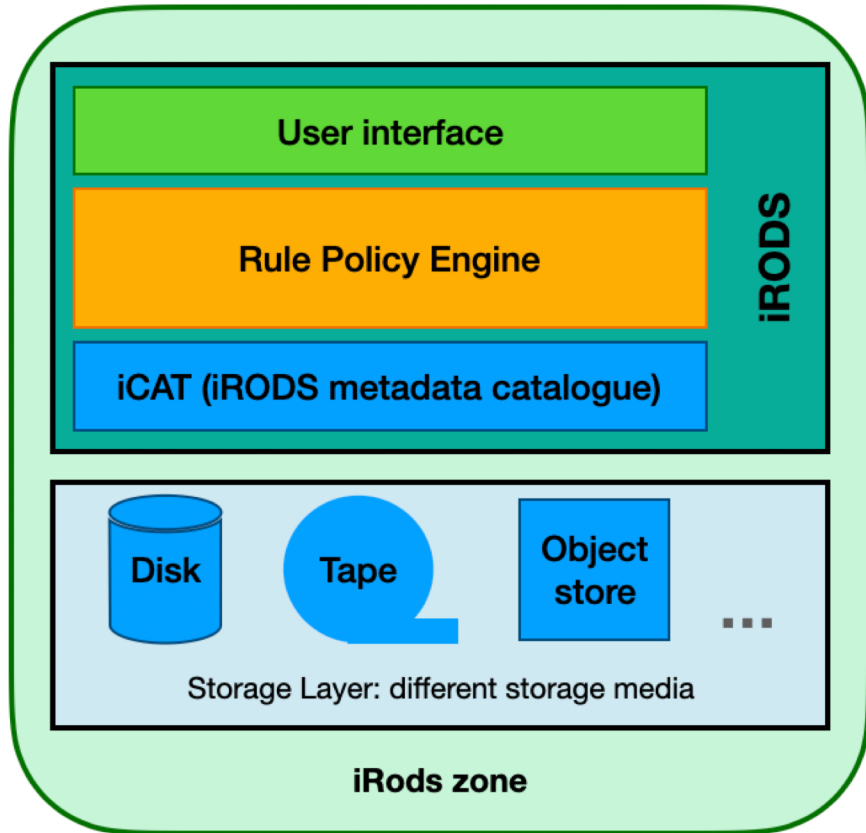
# The Pulsar Network: optimizing resource usage



This work is still in early stage development. There is an ELIXIR Implementation plan and other initiatives at EOSC level working on this.

We are still evaluating technologies to support the Pulsar Network and also funding opportunities.

# The Pulsar Network: optimizing resource usage



- Independent Administrative domains
- Users can access shared data and metadata in other zones
- No passwords needed, authenticated to local zone

Distributed file systems like iRODS (or similar solution) are keeping track of objects (files, metadata, etc.) and their locations.

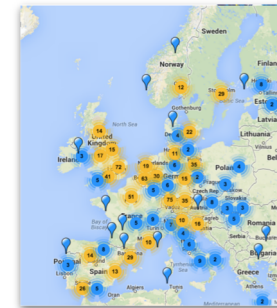
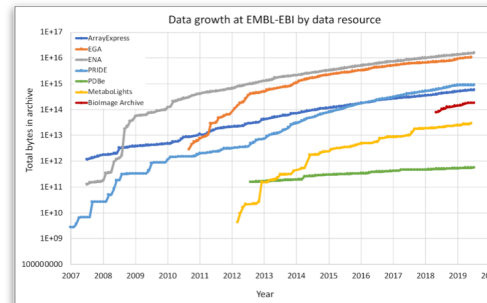
# The Pulsar Network: optimizing resource usage

- The job-staging is dependent on the specific tool and analysis and can become the dominating part of the job runtime.
- A network-wide caching layer can accelerate job-staging times and thus job runtimes.
- Objects can be located in different physical locations and can be replicated into other locations before a job starts.
- Adding iRODS or similar solution support would allow replicating data wherever it's needed on the filesystem level without changing logic at the application level. However, this would require that all partners support a single distributed file system, which in turn would make it harder to contribute to the network.
- In case files are already available in a Pulsar destination, the staging step will take this into account.

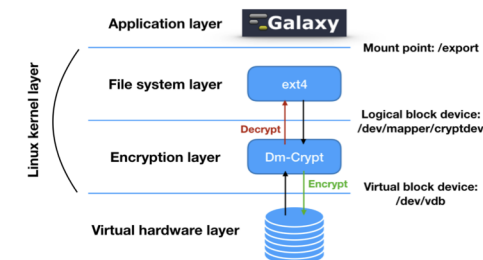


# Conclusions

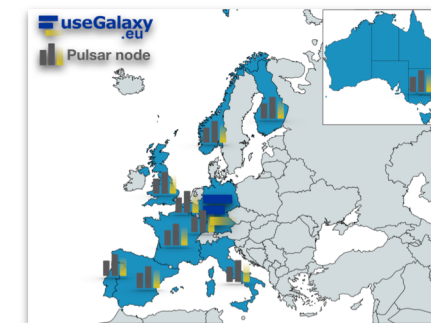
Data rapid growth,  
distributed across Europe  
and often under GDPR.



On-demand solution for rapidly  
store and analyse data, also in  
case of sensitive data.



Distributed Storage (and compute)  
solution across Europe.





# Thank you for your attention!

## Contacts

- ELIXIR: [elixir-europe.org](http://elixir-europe.org)
- ELIXIR Italy: [elixir-Italy.org](http://elixir-Italy.org)
- Head of Node: [g.pesole@ibiom.cnr.it](mailto:g.pesole@ibiom.cnr.it)
- Technical Coordinator: [federico.zambelli@unimi.it](mailto:federico.zambelli@unimi.it)
- Compute platform : [giacinto.donvito@ba.infn.it](mailto:giacinto.donvito@ba.infn.it)



# Backup

# ELIXIR Italy compute platform upgrade

- A multi-institution, distributed and federated compute and storage infrastructure
- Providing most advanced technologies in the fields of Cloud and HPC
  - Able to support the most modern Artificial Intelligence and Big Data analysis solutions
- Flexible and expandable in the future aiming to support future bioinformatics use cases
- The overall infrastructure will leverage about:
  - 27'000 Cpu/cores
  - About 20Pyte of disk storage
  - 20 NVIDIA V100 GPU
- Distributed over 4 different sites in Italy