

In March 2008, the nationwide virtual tumourbank project was launched by the Belgian Minister of Health, Ms. Laurette Onkelinx (initiative 27 of the Belgian Cancer Plan). The Belgian Virtual Tumourbank (BVT network) encompasses the tumour biobanks from eleven Belgian university hospitals (a list of these hospitals is available on [the BVT website](#)) that collect and store residual human tumour samples locally. In order to facilitate the search for tumour samples scattered among different Belgian institutions, data collected at sample level are made available for researchers via the online BVT catalogue (BVTc) application. A high quality of data on the tumour samples requested by scientists for research in oncology is guaranteed by automatic and manual controls performed by the BVT project team at the Belgian Cancer Registry.

SAMPLE AVAILABILITY REQUEST

To check if specific samples for your research are available in our catalogue, you can complete [the sample availability request form](#) (Figure 1) on the BVT website.

This document enables verification of the number of samples available in the BVT catalogue (BVTc), along with the contact details of the local biobanks hosting the samples of interest.

Scan this code



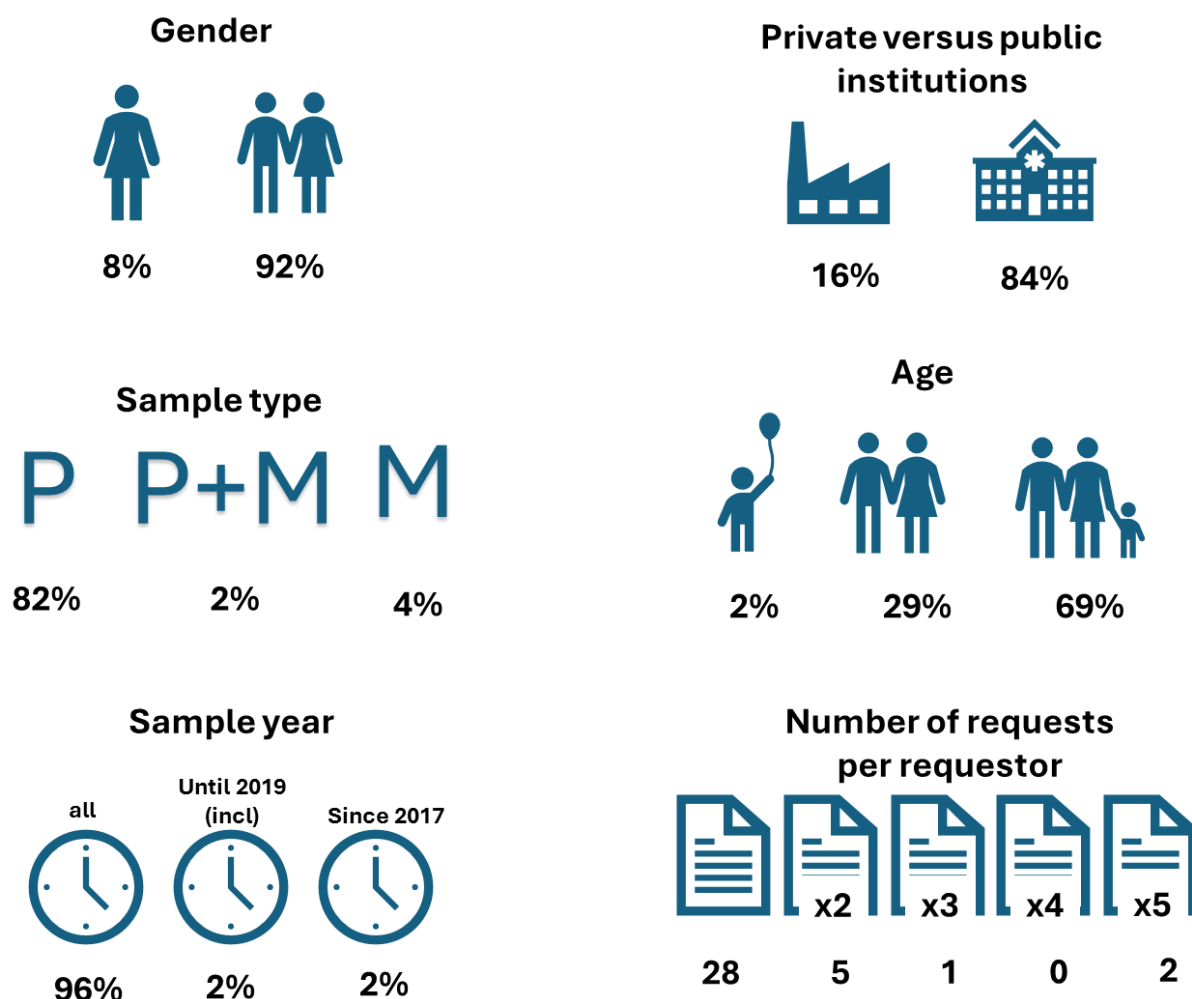
At this moment (June 2025), a total of **more than 143,000** registrations including 125,910 primary tumour samples and 16,804 metastasis samples, are available in BVTc.

So far, we have received **51** Sample Availability Requests (SAR). Seven of the requests originated from abroad, including the United Kingdom, France and Portugal.

First name: * Surname: * Function: * E-mail: * Telephone: * Affiliation (full name and address): * Topography ICD-O-3 code(s): Morphology ICD-O-3 code(s): pTNM: Number of patients: Conservation mode: ☐ Paraffin ☐ -20°C ☐ -80°C ☐ -120°C or colder ☐ Liquid nitrogen ☐ Other If other conservation mode is selected, please specify: Required human material type(s): Number of samples (amount) per patient: Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female Age range:	Exclusion criteria (if any): Any other specific requirements (if any): Title of the project: * Brief description of the project (max. 1 page): * Are there other (academic/industrial) partners involved in the project? If yes, please specify: * Send the information
--	--

Figure 1: Preview of the online Sample Availability Request (SAR) form

THE REQUESTS IN NUMBERS



Only four (8%) requests explicitly asked for female samples while no **gender** specification was made for the remaining requests. Eight (16%) requests came from **industry**, while the other requests were from public institutions. For 49 requests (96%), no **sample year** was specified. Fifteen (29%) requests were for samples from adult patients, including 2 with additional age specifications (> 50 years and 40-48 years). Samples from children and adolescents were asked only in one request (2%) and for 35 requests (69%) there was no restriction on **age**. The majority of the requests concern primary tumour samples (82%). For two requests (4%) only metastasis samples were needed and one request asked for both primary tumour and metastasis samples. For the remaining six requests (12%) no clear specification of the **sample type** could be made based on the submitted form. Most **requestors** (n=28) completed the form only once. However, two requestors submitted the form five times, one requestor three times and five requestors twice.

WHICH SAMPLE SITES AND CONSERVATION MODES ARE REQUESTED?

Most requested tumour sample localisations were lung, liver, colorectal and breast. For 11 requests (22%) multiple sample localisations were needed while for 13 requests (25%) no specification of the localisation was provided.

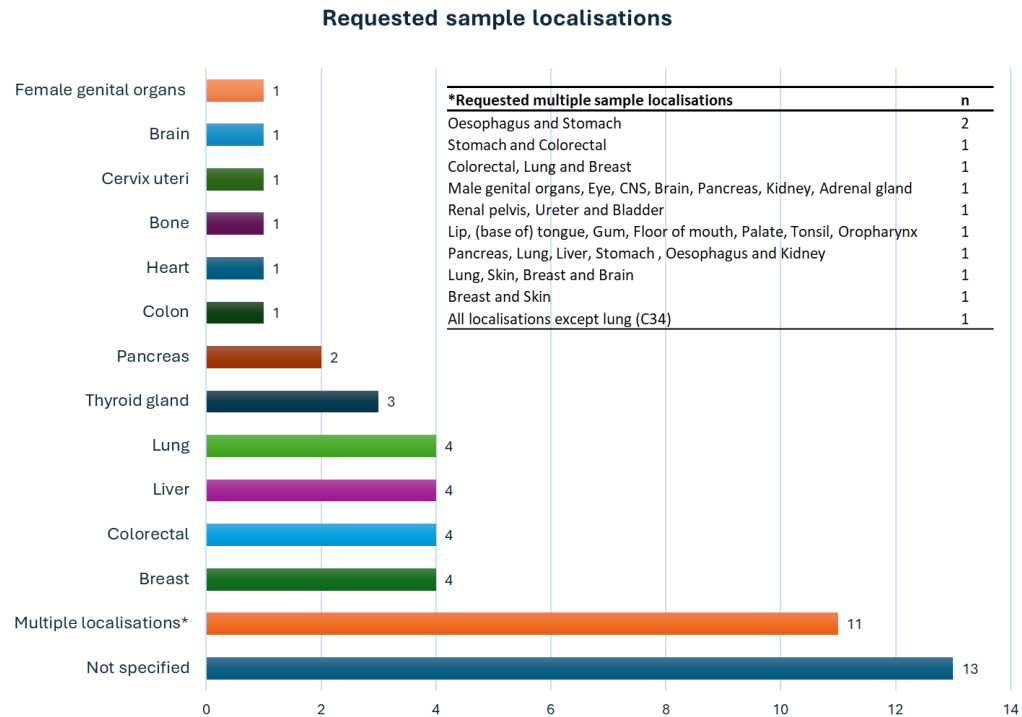


Figure 2: Requested sample localisations
Inset: Specification of the requests with multiple sample localisations

The most frequently requested tumour samples were samples embedded in paraffin (21%), followed by frozen samples (14%) and both frozen samples and paraffin samples (14%). For 35% of the requests no specification of the conservation mode was made (figure 3).

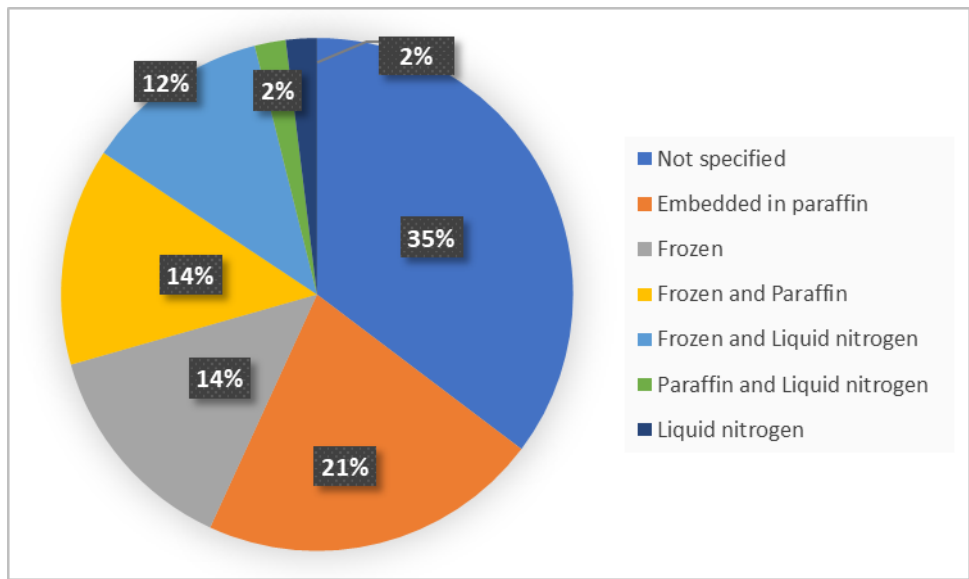


Figure 3: Requested modes of conservation

HOW ABOUT EXCLUSION CRITERIA?

In 37 requests (73%) no specific exclusion criteria were mentioned. An overview of the exclusion criteria in the remaining requests is presented in the table below.

Exclusion criteria	n	%
Auto-immune disease, immunosuppressive drugs	5	10
Samples obtained before 2017	1	2
Samples obtained after 2020 and no clinico-pathological data available	1	2
Only patient matched pairs (brain metastasis with primary lung, skin or breast tumour)	1	2
Active infection, liver, lung or kidney disease, active neoplasm diagnosed during past 5 years	1	2
Inflammatory disease linked to the bowel (IBD, Crohn,...) and also auto-immune	1	2
Viral hepatitis	1	2
Lung cancer	1	2
Prior history of cancer, treatment prior to sample collection, hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV infection at time of sampling	1	2
Tumours not related to Von-Hippel Lindau disease.	1	2

Table 1: Overview of the exclusion criteria

LINKEDIN







Belgian Virtual Tumourbank (BVT)

An online tool for researchers to find residual human tumour samples of interest in 11 biobanks in Belgium
Onderzoeksdiensten · Sint-Joost-ten-Node, Brussels Region · 131 volgers · 2-10 medewerkers

 Katia en 9 andere connecties volgen deze pagina

[Bericht sturen](#) [Volg ik](#) [...](#)

Scan the QR-code and follow us on LinkedIn for regular updates and news about the BVT.

Do you wish to be kept informed in the future?
Do you no longer wish to receive our information?
Send an email to biobank@kankerregister.org
Belgian Cancer Registry | Brussels | www.kankerregister.org