**EN**

**Horizon Europe**

**Work Programme 2021-2022**

*3. Research Infrastructures*

*(European Commission Decision C(2021)1940 of 31 March 2021)*

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# Introduction

The overall objective of the Research Infrastructures Programme under Horizon Europe is to empower Europe through world-class and accessible research infrastructures.

Research infrastructures (RIs), including the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC), are crucial enablers of research and technological innovation and drivers of multidisciplinary and data-intensive science.

Europe has a rich landscape of research infrastructures, which has the potential to enhance society's long term and consistent problem-solving capacity and ensure the provision of customised, multidisciplinary, impact-oriented and integrated RI services and resources to support an effective and responsive health system. In this regard, Research Infrastructures can substantially contribute to the objectives of Horizon Europe clusters.

On 30 January 2020 the World Health Organisation declared the COVID-19 outbreak a public health emergency of international concern.

One year later, the pandemic is still not under control.

While vaccines against the COVID-19 disease are now becoming available and being used, variants of the causative virus pathogen (SARS-CoV-2) are increasingly of concern, because of their impact on transmissibility, severity of disease and vaccine effectiveness.

As outlined in the Commission Communication 'HERA Incubator: Anticipating together the threat of COVID-19 variants'[1], an additional concerted EU effort is needed to further speed up the process of understanding the occurrence and spread of variants and their effect on disease severity and vaccine effectiveness.

For this reason, this work programme will open in 2021 two specific actions aiming at mobilising research infrastructures in response to infectious disease epidemics and future emerging pathogens of concern, and, as a first challenge, at supporting and enabling a rapid research response to the spread of SARS-CoV-2 variants and to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- FAIR[2] and open data sharing in support to European preparedness for COVID-19 and other infectious diseases
- Research infrastructure services for rapid research responses to COVID-19 and other infectious disease epidemics

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[1] COM(2021)78 final of 17 February 2021, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-hera-incubator-anticipating-threat-covid-19-variants_en.pdf
[2] Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable, https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/

# Other Actions not subject to calls for proposals

## 1. FAIR and open data sharing in support to European preparedness for COVID-19 and other infectious diseases

As part of the EU response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to the rising spread of SARS-CoV-2 variants, grants will be awarded without a call for proposal in accordance with Article 195 (b) of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 to address this exceptional emergency. An invitation to apply for funding will be published on the Funding & Tenders Portal that will open a dedicated section where proposals can be submitted. This will be communicated to the National Contact Points. The invitation to apply for funding will be open to all eligible entities or limited to targeted entities, taking into account the need to achieve the underlying objectives in a quick and efficient manner considering the exceptional circumstances ('extreme urgency' due the COVID-19 pandemic).

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- European researchers and public health actors fighting the spread of infectious diseases, e.g. COVID-19 and emerging infectious diseases are able to store, share, access, analyse, process and cite research and clinical data and other research digital objects across disciplines and national borders and to collaborate with global partners;

- federation of viral and human infectious disease data from national and international centres enables pan-European and global sharing and combination of research and clinical data, thereby catalysing and accelerating research advances to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for future outbreaks;

- development of digital tools and data analytics for pandemic and outbreak preparedness, including tracking genomic variations of SARS-CoV-2, linking genomic and clinical data to support timely identification of variants of concern, and subsequent rapid characterisation of such strains to inform public health action;

- linking of FAIR data and metadata on SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19, on other related viruses and diseases, and on socio-economic consequences, across research fields, from omics, clinical, and epidemiological research, to Social Sciences and Humanities accelerate infectious disease research, surveillance and outbreak investigation;

- contribute to the Horizon Europe European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) Partnership and to the development of the European Health Data Space (EHDS).

Expected impact

Proposals should set out a credible pathway to contributing to one or several of the following impacts:

- transforming the way researchers as well as relevant actors in the public and private sectors create, share and exploit research outputs (data, publications, protocols, methodologies, software, code, etc.) within and across research disciplines, and with the public health sector, leading to improved timeliness, better quality, more innovation, higher productivity of research and a better integration between research outputs and public health policy;

- seamless access to and management of increasing volumes of research data following FAIR principles (and that are as open as possible, as closed as necessary) and other research outputs stimulating the development and uptake of a wide range of new innovative and value-added services from public and commercial providers;

- improving trust in science through increased FAIRness, openness and quality of scientific research in Europe, supported by more meaningful monitoring and better facilitators for reproducibility, validation and re-use of research results, and by improving pathways for the communication of science to the public.

Scope: This action responds to the need to enable researchers, health care professionals and society at large to share, access, analyse, link and process research data and other research digital objects across disciplines and national borders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As seen with other infectious disease outbreaks, such as haemorrhagic fevers, COVID-19 will likely remain a societal challenge beyond the immediate outbreak, considering its destructive and disruptive impact on healthcare systems and the economy. In addition to the ongoing health threat from SARS-CoV-2, the risk from other emerging pathogens also persists, which will also require similar concerted action to identify and characterise infections with pandemic potential, and enable rapid public health action to mitigate health and societal impact. Provision of comprehensive open data on infectious agents and diseases during outbreaks support evidence-based quality assessment - across scientific, medical, public health and policy domains and promotes reproducibility of research outcomes. Particular importance should be placed on mobilising raw viral sequences and identifying and monitoring the spread of SARS-CoV-2 variants. European readiness for future pandemics is of utmost importance and should be addressed to ensure the preparedness of infrastructure building on already existing frameworks for broader use such as the EOSC.

Proposals should facilitate and accelerate the access to, and the linking of data and metadata on SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19, including through the European COVID-19 Data Portal[3], the Versatile Emerging infectious disease Observatory[4] (VEO) and other relevant initiatives, with the emphasis on identifying and tracking of new SARS-CoV-2 variants and creating appropriate links with serology and other host data. The scope of the initiative should further expand to other relevant infectious diseases, and incorporate epidemiological, clinical (including Real World Data), and socio-economic data, spanning from molecular biology to other disciplines, including Social Sciences and Humanities. A One-Health approach building on the latest technological advances, covering epidemics and epizootics is encouraged.

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[3]     https://www.covid19dataportal.org
[4]     https://www.veo-europe.eu/

Particular importance should be given to the need of federating data between national centres to effectively manage data protection.

To ensure the interoperability of the data, community best practices including the use of community-endorsed standards and community metadata schemas should be encouraged. Newly implemented domain specific research data solutions from the project should feed into the work of established international initiatives. Particular attention should be given to the harmonisation and management of meta-data and sample- identifiers to ensure interoperability of national and regional efforts into the EOSC and the long-term cataloguing of data resources within the EOSC.

A strong focus should be placed on exploiting and contributing to EOSC capabilities for data access and federation as well as relevant standards and policies for managing, sharing and reusing research data from different disciplines. As such, the proposals should demonstrate the value of sharing FAIR research data that is as open as possible through EOSC, help consolidating data-sharing and data management practices across the Member States, Associated Countries and beyond, and provide feedback to the EOSC Partnership for the future evolution of EOSC.

Proposals should build on the European COVID-19 Data Platform[5] and support, directly or in combination with financial support to third parties, the creation of national and regional structures to coordinate and promote in-country actions, such as to further enhance genomic surveillance and rapid-response capabilities.

Cooperation with the grant awarded under the *Other action* "Research infrastructure services for rapid research responses to COVID-19 and other infectious disease epidemics" should be developed from the outset to identify and better exploit related synergies, share results, avoid overlaps and ensure that data generated from access to infectious disease services can be available for re-use through the EOSC. To this extent, proposals should provide for dedicated activities and earmark appropriate resources. Proposals should consider already established national and European infrastructures and build on existing efforts, including actions stemming from Cohesion policy programmes. Proposals should seek to establish synergies with the European Health Data Space as well as relevant initiatives under Digital Europe.

To ensure complementarity of outcomes, alignment with EOSC policies, and a synergetic development of different thematic areas within EOSC, proposals are expected to cooperate and align with activities of the EOSC Partnership and to coordinate with relevant initiatives and projects contributing to the development of EOSC, particularly in the areas of data interoperability.

All software developed under this action should be open source, licensed under a CC0 public domain dedication or under an open source license as recommended by the Free Software Foundation and the Open Source Initiative.

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[5]    https://www.covid19dataportal.org

This action seeks to address the challenges linked to the COVID-19 variants. As such, the granting authority hereby requests activation of the public emergency provisions, meaning that the beneficiaries must comply with the public emergency related provisions listed in the General Annexes concerning the project implementation under - Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), background and results, access rights and rights of use (article 16 and Annex 5) for the duration of the pandemic; and under Communication, dissemination, open science and visibility (article 17 and Annex 5) during the entire duration of the action and for four years after the end of the action.

Specific Conditions

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes. The following topic specific conditions apply:

*Eligibility conditions*

Due to the urgency of this action and geographical relevance of this action and considering the Union's interest to retain, in principle, relations with the countries associated to Horizon 2020, and other third countries in the process of association to Horizon Europe, legal entities established in Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo [6] , Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom are eligible for funding from the Union even if the Horizon Europe association agreement with the third country concerned does not apply at the time of signature of the grant agreement.

The consortium must include at least one independent legal entity established in a Member State and at least two other independent legal entities each established in different Member States or countries listed above.

*Award criteria*

Additional sub-criterion for *Impact*:

- The extent to which the proposed work incorporates the necessary resources and efforts to coordinate with other relevant projects and the EOSC governance structure in the context of the EOSC Partnership.

*Procedure*

The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project.

*Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements*

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[6]     This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants.

Beneficiaries must deposit the digital research data generated in the action in a trusted repository federated in the EOSC in compliance with EOSC requirements.

Beneficiaries will be subject to the additional access rights: each beneficiary must grant royalty-free access to its results to the EOSC Association for monitoring and developing policies and strategies for the European Open Science Cloud.

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Research and Innovation Actions - Grant awarded without call for proposals in accordance with Article 195 (b) of the Financial Regulation

Indicative timetable: Second quarter 2021

Indicative budget: EUR 12.00 million from the 2021 budget

## 2. Research infrastructure services for rapid research responses to COVID-19 and other infectious disease epidemics

As part of the EU response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to the rising spread of SARS-CoV-2 variants, grants will be awarded without a call for proposal in accordance with Article 195 (b) of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 to address this exceptional emergency. An invitation to apply for funding will be published on the Funding & Tenders Portal that will open a dedicated section where proposals can be submitted. This will be communicated to the National Contact Points. The invitation to apply for funding will be open to all eligible entities or limited to targeted entities, taking into account the need to achieve the underlying objectives in a quick and efficient manner considering the exceptional circumstances ('extreme urgency' due the COVID-19 pandemic).

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- comprehensive catalogue of research infrastructure services relevant to tackle infectious diseases epidemics is available, including services supporting pertinent social sciences research;

- fast assembly and provision of innovative, customised and efficient research infrastructure services to support research linked to detecting, assessing and combatting newly emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants;

- challenge driven integration of research infrastructures to better support research addressing infectious diseases and face epidemics, including for use by epidemics risk assessment and risk management bodies (such as the European Centre for Disease prevention and Control (ECDC), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Organisation of Animal Health (OIE) and national epidemics management bodies);

- rapid response to epidemics outbreaks through research infrastructure services underpinning and supporting research aiming to understand causes and development of the epidemic;

- development of novel/adapted epidemics intervention tools and measures enabled by relevant research infrastructure (RI) services;

- availability of research data emerging from access provision activities for re-use on common data platforms and registries, according to FAIR principles and compliant with legal provisions under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Expected Impact: Proposals should set out a credible pathway to contributing to several of the following impacts

- enhancement of EU capacity to identify, characterise and mitigate the effects of COVID-19 virus variants of concern, and future emerging pathogens of public health concern;

- reinforced research infrastructures capacity to provide at scale and across the EU services to support excellent research to address societal challenges, and Horizon Europe objectives;

- enhanced and increased society's long-term and consistent problem-solving capacity and evidence-based policy making in areas linked to health, including a better understanding of socio-economic implications, through the provision of innovative, customised and efficient RI services;

- new discoveries and knowledge breakthroughs enabled by access provision to the best and in some cases unique state-of-the-art RIs;

- a new generation of researchers trained to optimally exploit all the essential and advanced tools for their research.

Scope: Proposals under this action, will integrate research infrastructure services to form a comprehensive and inclusive portfolio to support research in response to infectious disease epidemics or underpinning respective forefront research in the field. As a first immediate challenge, the delivered services should support research targeting newly emerging SARS-Cov-2 variants and addressing the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.

Proposals will support the provision of trans-national and/or virtual access to researchers as well as training for using the infrastructures, and activities to improve, customise and integrate the services the infrastructures provide, so as to facilitate and integrate the access procedures and to further develop the remote or virtual provision of services.

Access to research infrastructure services will be provided to users to support their research projects targeting the development of new or adapted prevention and/or intervention tools and measures, such as new or adapted diagnostic procedures and therapies, drugs, vaccines, clinical disease management or disease vector control, or evidence-based public health, socio-

behavioural and socio-economic measures. Priority should be given to supporting research projects targeting newly emerging virus variants, focusing on their detection, characterisation, surveillance and assessment (changes in transmissibility and disease manifestation) and on the adaptation of intervention and prevention measures (medication, vaccines, public health measures) which likely also requires additional regulatory and clinical trials support.

Following the One-Health concept, services supporting research on transmission of pathogens from animals to humans (or vice versa animals as host reservoir), including vector-borne transmission, should be covered. Research infrastructures dealing with social science should be involved to enable data acquisition enhancing understanding of individual and population perceptions and behaviours in an epidemic setting, including public response to intervention measures such as social distancing, vaccine campaigns, etc., over the course of an epidemic. Flexibility in the provision of services should be properly demonstrated to ensure fast re-orientation and expansion of the portfolio in response to unexpected epidemics situations, including emerging threats posed by new SARS-CoV-2 variants. Effective operational links to epidemics risk assessment and management bodies like ECDC, WHO, OIE, a possible future EU Health Emergency preparedness and Response Authority (EU-HERA) and national authorities are essential. Global standards, relevant data platforms and registries should be used to make user project results openly available and usable, thus enabling further research on pathogens, disease manifestation, behavioural research and other epidemics related social science research.

Appropriate links should be ensured with the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC), the European COVID-19 Data Platform and the newly established Population Health Information Research Infrastructure for COVID-19 (PHIRI). Data management (and related ethics issues) and interoperability should be addressed.

To identify and better exploit related synergies, share results and avoid overlaps, grants awarded under this action should cooperate with those awarded under the *Other action* "FAIR and open data sharing in support of European preparedness for COVID-19 and other infectious diseases". To this extent, proposals should provide for dedicated activities and earmark appropriate resources.

Pandemics are global challenges and collaboration with relevant international partners should be envisaged.

Proposals should adhere to the guidelines and principles of the [European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures](#)[7].

Proposals should make available to researchers the widest and most comprehensive portfolio of research infrastructures services which are relevant for the scope. To this extent, they should involve, as beneficiaries or as third parties, the necessary interdisciplinary set of

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[7]     https://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/pdf/2016_charterforaccessto-ris.pdf

research infrastructures of European interest[8] that provide such services. The inclusiveness of the proposal will be taken into account in the Excellence score.

Research infrastructures from third countries[9] may be involved when appropriate, in particular when they offer complementary or more advanced services, including data, than those available in Europe.

Proposals could consider, for their inclusion in the service portfolio, relevant services and expertise offered by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) , and in particular by its Nanobiotechnology laboratories [10] , on high-end characterisation of therapeutics against pandemics, including antibodies, viral antigens, vaccine nanocarriers, and, more in general, on characterisation of nanomaterials, nanomedicines and advanced materials.

Grants awarded under this action are expected to duly contribute to any future Partnership for Pandemic Preparedness that might be established under Horizon Europe.

Proposals should include an outreach plan to actively advertise its services to targeted research communities and, if applicable, to relevant industries, including SMEs.

Proposals are expected to exploit synergies and to ensure complementarity and coherence with other EU grants supporting access provision.

Proposals will include the list of services/installations[11] opened by research infrastructures for trans-national or virtual access and the amounts of units of access made available for users.

Further conditions and requirements relating to access provisions that applicants should fulfil when drafting a proposal are given in the "Specific features for Research Infrastructures" section of this Work Programme. Compliance with these provisions will be taken into account during evaluation.

Specific Conditions

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes. The following topic specific conditions apply:

*Admissibility conditions*

Applicants are not required to submit a plan for the exploitation and dissemination of the results, as the main objective of these actions is the service provision.

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[8] A research infrastructure is of European interest when is able to attract users from EU or associated countries other than the country where the infrastructure is located. This includes ESFRI and ERIC infrastructures.

[9] See the Eligibility conditions for this action.

[10] For the participation of the JRC see General Annex B.

[11] 'Installation' means a part or a service of a research infrastructure that can be used independently from the rest. A research infrastructure consists of one or more installations.

As proposals need to give information on the research infrastructures providing access, the page limit of the application is 100 pages.

*Eligibility conditions*

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.

Given the specific nature of this action, access provision activities must be included in the proposal. Please read carefully the provisions under the section "Specific features for Research Infrastructures" at the end of this work programme part before preparing your application.

Due to the urgency of this action and geographical relevance of this action and considering the Union's interest to retain, in principle, relations with the countries associated to Horizon 2020, and other third countries in the process of association to Horizon Europe, legal entities established in Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo [12] , Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom are eligible for funding from the Union even if the Horizon Europe association agreement with the third country concerned does not apply at the time of signature of the grant agreement.

The consortium must include at least one independent legal entity established in a Member State and at least two other independent legal entities each established in different Member States or countries listed above.

Considering the Union's interest to make accessible to its researchers the most advanced research infrastructures, wherever they are in the world, legal entities established in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore and USA, which provide, under the grant, access to their research infrastructures to researchers from Member States and Associated Countries, are exceptionally eligible for funding from the Union under this topic.

*Award criteria*

*For the 'Excellence' criterion*, in addition to its standard sub-criteria, the following aspects will also be taken into account:

- The extent to which the access activities (trans-national and/or virtual access) will offer access to the state-of-the-art infrastructures of European interest in the field, high quality services, and will enable users to conduct excellent research.

- The extent to which the project will contribute to facilitating and integrating the access procedures, to improve the services the infrastructures provide and to further develop their on-line services.

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[12]    This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

*Procedure*

The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project.

*Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements*

Eligible costs may take form of unit costs for trans-national and virtual access to research infrastructures as defined in the Decision authorising the use of unit costs for the actions involving trans-national and virtual access (see Annex 2 of the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement).

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Research and Innovation Actions - Grant awarded without call for proposals in accordance with Article 195 (b) of the Financial Regulation

Indicative timetable: Second quarter 2021

Indicative budget: EUR 21.00 million from the 2021 budget

## Budget[13]

| | Budget line(s) | 2021 Budget (EUR million) | 2022 Budget (EUR million) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Other actions** | | | |
| Grant awarded without a call for proposals in accordance with Article 195 (b) of the Financial Regulation | | 33.00 | |
| | *from 01.020103* | *33.00* | |
| **Estimated total budget** | | 33.00 | |

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[13] The budget figures given in this table are rounded to two decimal places.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

## Specific Features for Research Infrastructure

This section provides further conditions and requirements on access provision that applicants must comply with, for the 'Research Infrastructure services for rapid research responses to COVID-19 and other infectious disease epidemics' action. Compliance with these provisions will also be taken into account during evaluation.

**Trans-national and/or virtual access**[14] **activities**.

*Trans-national access activities*

Trans-national access provision must be implemented as follows:

Trans-national access to infrastructure services offered under the grant is provided 'free of charge' to selected researchers or research teams (user-groups) including from industry. Access activities should be implemented in a coordinated way so as to improve the overall service provision to the research community. Access may be made available to external users, either **in person** ('hands-on'), when the user visits the infrastructure to make use of it, or through the provision to the user of **remote** scientific services, such as the provision of reference materials or samples, the remote access to a high-performance computing facility, the performance of sample analysis or sample deposition.

The research infrastructures must publicise widely the access offered under the grant agreement to ensure that researchers who might wish to have access to the infrastructures are made aware of the possibilities open to them. They must open specific calls to invite researchers to apply for access. The research infrastructures must promote equal opportunities in advertising the access and take into account gender issues when defining the support provided to visitors. They must maintain appropriate documentation to support and justify the amount of access reported. This documentation must include records of the names, nationalities, and home institutions of the users within the research teams, as well as the nature and quantity of access provided to them. To this extent, a unit of access to each infrastructure service/installation [15] needs to be identified and precisely defined in the proposal.

The selection of researchers or research teams must be carried out through an independent peer-review evaluation of the research projects (user projects) they wish to carry out at the infrastructure. The research team, or its majority, must work in countries other than the country(ies) where the infrastructure is located (when the infrastructure is composed of several research facilities, operated by different legal entities, this condition must apply to each facility) except when access is provided by an International organisation, the Joint Research Centre (JRC), an ERIC or similar legal entities with international membership. User teams where all or the majority of users work in third countries can be supported as long as

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[14]    See Annex 5 (Article 18) of Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement
[15]    "Installation" means a part or a service of a research infrastructure that can be used independently from the rest. A research infrastructure consists of one or more installations.

the cumulative access provided to them is below 20% of the total amount of units of access provided under the grant. In exceptional and well justified cases a higher percentage of access to third-country user teams can be set out in the proposal.

Only user groups that are allowed to disseminate the results they have generated under the action may be eligible for access (unless the users are working for SMEs).

The duration of stay at a research infrastructure must normally be limited to three months, unless otherwise provided for in the proposal.

The EU financial support to trans-national access will cover the *access costs*[16] incurred by the access provider in providing access to the selected researchers, as well as the travel and subsistence costs incurred in supporting visits to the infrastructure of these researchers.

The *access costs* charged to the grant will not include capital investments (including depreciation costs of equipment, infrastructure or other assets) nor internally invoiced goods and services, unless otherwise specified in the Work Programme, while they may cover the running costs of the infrastructure as well as the cost for the logistical, technological and scientific support for users' access. This includes costs for ad-hoc training users need to use the infrastructure and for preparatory and closing activities that may be necessary to carry out users' work on the infrastructure.

*Virtual access activities*

Virtual access provision must be implemented as follows:

Virtual access to research infrastructure is provided through communication networks to users complying with the RI's access policy, without selecting them. Examples of virtual access activities are provision of access to databases available via Internet, or data deposition services.

The research infrastructures must publicise widely the access offered under the grant agreement to ensure that researchers who might wish to have access to the infrastructures are made aware of the possibilities open to them.

The EU financial support to virtual access will cover the *access costs*[17] incurred by the infrastructure in providing access under the project, including the technological and scientific

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[16]     Access costs will be supported through the reimbursement of the eligible costs specifically incurred by a research infrastructure for providing access to the research teams selected for support under the project, or on the basis of unit costs calculated according to the methodology indicated in the Decision authorising the use of unit costs for the costs of providing trans-national and virtual access in Research Infrastructures actions under the Horizon Europe Programme. In the latter case the access costs will be calculated multiplying the unit cost by the quantity of access provided under the grant. The cost of the unit of access to the infrastructure, i.e. the unit cost, must then be indicated in the proposal. A combination of the two methods mentioned above will also be possible.

[17]     Access costs will be supported through the reimbursement of the eligible actual costs specifically incurred by a research infrastructure for providing virtual access to identified users under the project, or on the basis of unit costs calculated according to the methodology indicated in the Decision authorising the use of unit costs for the costs of providing trans-national and virtual access in Research Infrastructures actions under the Horizon Europe Programme. In the latter case, the access costs will be

support researchers need to effectively use the services. Capital investments (including depreciation costs of equipment, infrastructure or other assets) as well as internally invoiced goods and services will not be eligible costs unless otherwise specified under the specific call or topic, in which case only the portion used to provide virtual access under the project can be eligible. A unit of access to each research infrastructure service must be identified and precisely defined in the proposal. The provision of virtual access during the project lifetime will be measured through the units of access defined in the grant agreement and must be periodically assessed by an external board. Eligibility criteria (e.g. affiliation to a research or academic institution) for users can be defined in the proposal, to take into account the access policies of the different RIs.

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calculated multiplying the unit cost by the quantity of access provided under the grant. The cost of the unit of access to the research infrastructure, i.e. the unit cost, must then be indicated in the proposal. A combination of the two methods mentioned above will also be possible.