



FINAL REPORT

Defining the European relevance of Research Infrastructures

*A joint ESFRI, MERIL, and ESF MO Forum
on Research Infrastructures Workshop*

23-24 April 2012

Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies
Johann Wolfgang Goethe University
Ruth-Moufang-Str. 1
60438 Frankfurt am Main
Germany



MERIL
MAPPING OF THE EUROPEAN
RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE
LANDSCAPE



European Strategy Forum
on Research Infrastructures





CRITERIA FOR BEING INCLUDED IN THE MERIL DATABASE

Introduction

A joint workshop of representatives from ESFRI, the ESF MO Forum on RIs (MOFRI) and the MERIL steering committee, bringing together government and agency representatives with wide experience of the RI sector, met to consider the issue “European Relevance”, the stated criterion for inclusion in the MERIL (Mapping the European Research Infrastructure Landscape) database.

The workshop concluded that “European Relevance” is a term open to confusing and sometimes conflicting interpretation. It decided that the key issue for inclusion is that an RI is of **“More than National Relevance”**.

[Note that the latest draft of the Horizon 2020 text refers to Regional and Pan-European RIs, suggesting a perspective of whether the RI is of interest to a limited group of countries or to the whole EU.]

The model for MERIL data entry is that national agencies and other data intermediaries will identify those national facilities which qualify for the database, and a key workshop goal was to provide simple criteria by which such agencies could check RIs for eligibility.

CRITERIA

It was agreed that three primary factors need to be considered in deciding if an RI should be included in the MERIL database: Quality, Access and Management.

Quality


It is assumed that any RI funded by a national government or agency has already had some degree of quality assessment and will therefore meet acceptable quality standards.

The quality assessment of databases and collections requires a specific approach. It was agreed that for a database to be of more than national relevance it needs to be operating in a manner that enables its data or samples to be compared with those in other centres. This means that data should be easily and consistently retrievable, there should be appropriate metadata to enable the data to be analysed, compared and re-used, and that the RI is working to harmonised standards with other equivalent centres.

Access

To qualify for the MERIL database an RI must have clear and public rules and procedures for access to facility time or resource.

Access must be based on an assessment of the quality of the proposed use where there is limited resource.



Significant time must be available for outside users, national or international, or in the case of an RI operating in extended experiment or campaign mode, there must be openness to new partners joining experiments.

Strong indicators of being of greater than national relevance are:

- evidence of the Attractiveness of the RI to users from abroad, either from data showing actual use by non-nationals, or user interest where the RI is not yet operating. RIs that restrict access only to national users are excluded;
- the existence of formal agreements with non-national partners.

Management

Minimum standards of management are necessary to ensure that an RI is able to fulfil its potential to support external non-national users:

- a single entry point for the RI must be clearly identifiable;
- there must be clear support arrangements for Science Users;
- there must be clear procedures for the management of data.

The RI must have funding approved for a period sufficient to deliver the type of access typical for that class of facility. In the case of new projects to be included in the database, initial funding for construction and a clear timetable for the opening of research services must be in place.

Uniqueness

It was concluded that Uniqueness is not in itself an adequate or essential criterion, but that this may form part of the case for quality, or be evidenced in the attractiveness of the RI to external users.

Roll-out of the ESFRI criteria

ESFRI has produced a report on evaluation based on a wide survey of the existing national evaluation schemes. The report summarizes a set of broadly agreed criteria for deciding on the merit of a proposal for the construction, upgrade or on-going support of an RI. These criteria will now be discussed with other European organisations dealing with evaluation with the aim to elaborate together a set of criteria which should ideally be used for the evaluation of RIs in all European countries. From the ESFRI point of view this workshop was a starting point for the process of harmonisation of evaluation assessment of RIs in Europe.



OTHER ISSUES

Scope and limitations of the database

The workshop drew attention to key features of the exercise which must be clear to RIs in the database, data intermediaries, and users of the data.

This is an initial attempt at mapping the European landscape, and not an exhaustive list. The database is meant to be open to future new entries.

Inclusion in the database is not a formal endorsement of “European relevance” or any indication of merit.

Inclusion in the database has no relationship to funding mechanisms, but it is rather a list of those that have already been recognised or funded by an existing agency.

The MERIL database has no statistical significance for the RI landscape in Europe but might be a useful tool for scientists and also as an input for the ESFRI Strategic Working Groups.

Entries have been screened at national level on a best efforts basis but are not based on a detailed, standardised evaluation process.

Responses from Data Intermediaries to checking of the “Long List”

It was agreed that if no opinion is offered by a data intermediary on a proposed entry, then this will be removed from the list, and that this should be made clear to data intermediaries.

It was recognised that for some countries or subjects the checking of entries will be challenging so the MERIL team were urged to work flexibly to agree timetables with data intermediaries.

MERIL/MOFRI Science Policy Briefing

Other comments recorded, including more detail on the expectations of databases of more than national relevance, and the need for on-going reviews of RIs, will be used as input to a joint MERIL/MOFRI Science Policy Briefing to be produced later in 2012.



Workshop Organising Committee

Claudia Ritter, ESFRI & MERIL Steering Committee

Peter Fletcher, MERIL Steering Committee & MO Forum, workshop rapporteur

Johannes Janssen, MERIL Steering Committee & MO Forum

Christian Renner, MO Forum

Paul Beckers, MERIL & MO Forum

Gwenaelle Le Cochenec, MERIL & MO Forum

Correspondence should be addressed to: Paul Beckers (meril@esf.org)

Annex 1 Programme

Annex 2 List of participants




Programme

Workshop Objectives

- Roll-out of the ESFRI criteria for the evaluation of pan-European RI
- To examine how to define the European relevance of RIs, and ways to assess this
- To provide input to the Mapping of the European Research Infrastructure Landscape (MERIL) Project
- To feed into a position paper to be developed by the MO Forum

Monday 23 April 2012

- 10.00 **Open and Welcome** – *Dr. Johannes Janssen, DFG, MO Forum Chair*
- 10.05 **Setting the Scene and Objectives of the Workshop** – *Dr. John Womersley, STFC*
- 10.15 **Strategic considerations concerning the evaluation methodology of Research Infrastructures** -
Dr. Beatrix Vierkorn-Rudolph, ESFRI Chair
- 10.50 **Coffee Break**
- 11.15 **Defining European relevance in National roadmap exercises/funding programmes** – *Chaired by Dr. John Womersley, STFC*
- Spain – *Mrs. Ana Aricha Yanguas, Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness*
 - France – *Dr. Jean Béhue, Ministry of High Education and Research*
 - Estonia – *Mr. Priit Tamm, Estonian Research Council*
 - Switzerland – *Dr. Cornelia Sommer, Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF)*
 - Netherlands – *Dr. Cas Maessen, Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)*
 - Hungary – *Professor Dénes L. Nagy, Hungarian Academy of Sciences*
- 12.40 **The MERIL experience** – identifying European relevance for the database and portal – past and present experience. *Mr. Paul Beckers, ESF, MERIL Project Manager*
- 13.00 **The view from the research base** – how RIs and sectors see European relevance
- ERF – *Professor Carlo Rizzuto, Chair*
 - Humanities – *Professor Milena Zic-Fuchs, Chair of the ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities*
- 13.30 **Lunch**
- 14.30 **Breakout groups to discuss European relevance**
1. *Machines*
 2. *Experiments*
 3. *Objects or Data*
- 16.30 **Coffee Break**



17.00 **Plenary session:** hot topics from the breakout groups for debate overnight – *Chaired by Dr. Peter Fletcher, STFC*

- First discussion – European relevance and pan-European relevance – what is the difference?

18.00 **Close**

19.30 **Dinner and discussions**

Tuesday 24 April 2012

9.00 **Presentations from breakout groups:** highlighting specific needs and values (10 mins each) – *Chaired by Dr. Johannes Janssen, DFG, MO Forum Chair*

9.30 **Debate and discussion** – *Chaired by Dr. Johannes Janssen, DFG, MO Forum Chair*

10.30 **Coffee break**

11.00 **Comments from ESFRI on the results of the breakout groups**

11.15 **Comments from MERIL on the results of the breakout groups**

11.30 **Draft principles for defining European relevance** of RIs as basis for entries to the MERIL portal and mirror these with the ESFRI criteria – *Chaired by Dr. Peter Fletcher, STFC*
(Text and assessment criteria to be agreed upon after the meeting).

12.30 **Concluding Remarks** – *Dr. Johannes Janssen, DFG, MO Forum Chair*

12.45 **Lunch**

14.00 **Depart**



List of Participants

Ana Aricha

Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness
ana.aricha@mineco.es

Paul Beckers

European Science Foundation
pbeckers@esf.org

Jean Béhue

Ministry of Higher Education and Research
jean.behue@recherche.gouv.fr

Anne-Marie Brass

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS)
anne-marie.brass@cnrs-dir.fr

Aurélien Carbonnière

Ifremer
aurelien.carbonniere@ifremer.fr

Ruth Davis

Higher Education Authority
rdavis@hea.ie

Hans-Jürgen Donath

PT-DESY
hans-juergen.donath@desy.de

Peter W.H. Fletcher

Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)
peter.fletcher@stfc.ac.uk

Kerstin Helfrich (representing Annette Barkhaus)

University of Bonn
kerstinhelfrich@web.de

Eeva Ikonen

The Academy of Finland
eeva.ikonen@aka.fi

Johannes Janssen

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft
Johannes.janssen@dfg.de

Emmanuelle Klein

INRA
emmanuelle.klein@paris.inra.fr

Christian Kurrer

European Commission
christian.kurrer@ec.europa.eu

Gwenaelle Le Cochenec

European Science Foundation
glecochenec@esf.org

Peter Levai

Hungarian Academy of Sciences
levai.peter@wigner.mta.hu

Cas Maessen

Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)
k.maessen@nwo.nl

Jean Moulin

Belgian Federal Science Policy Office
jean.moulin@stis.belspo.be

Denes Nagy

Hungarian Academy of Sciences
nagy.denes@wigner.mta.hu

Vladimir Nekvasil

Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic
nekvasil@kav.cas.cz

Nicoletta Palazzo

Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR)
nicoletta.palazzo@cnr.it

Agne Paleviciute

Research Council of Lithuania
agne.paleviciute@imt.lt

Christian Renner

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft
Christian.renner@dfg.de

Claudia Ritter

ESFRI
Claudia.Ritter@dlr.de

Carlo Rizzuto

Sincrotrone Trieste S.C.p.A.
carlo.rizzuto@elettra.trieste.it

Christian Rolando

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS)
Christian.Rolando@cnrs-dir.fr

Richard Salives

Inserm
richard.salives@inserm.fr

Cornelia Sommer

SNF-Swiss National Science Foundation
csommer@snf.ch

Priit Tamm

Estonian Research Council
priit.tamm@etag.ee

Annika Thies

Helmholtz Association
annika.thies@helmholtz.de

Beatrix Vierkorn-Rudolph

ESFRI
Beatrix.Vierkorn-Rudolph@bmbf.bund.de

John Womersley

Science and Technology Facilities Council
john.womersley@stfc.ac.uk

Leila Young (representing Annette Barkhaus)

German Council of Science and Humanities
young@wissenschaftsrat.de

Milena Zic Fuchs

University of Zagreb
mzicfuch@ffzg.hr