

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (*FAQs*)

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1. What are Research Infrastructures?

An efficient and attractive Research & Innovation ecosystem, apart from researchers and institutions, requires **Research Infrastructures (RIs)**, which can be deployed for research on complex scientific subjects and engage in top-level research at international standards. Research infrastructures are indispensable in all disciplines of research and adequately connect education and innovation with research, within the knowledge triangle.

For the purpose of the current roadmap process – aiming to identify priorities for Research Infrastructures in Greece - additionally to the EC definition given in the *Guidelines* document (see **0**), Research Infrastructures are defined as substantial research tools, resources or service facilities building upon regional and national competitive advantages, as identified in the broader **Research & Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation - RIS3** objectives.

The roadmap will identify state-of-the-art shared *service platforms*, sustained by consortia of proven know-how and expertise in deploying and operating such facilities which are expected to attract a critical mass of user communities in their respective scientific areas. Research infrastructures may be single-sited, distributed or virtual.

They have long life spans (*generally in excess of 10 years*). The total lifespan of a research infrastructure comprises of various updating and renewal cycles allowing for the scientific progress and the limited predictability of scientific success. This definition also includes e-infrastructure, such as networks, clouds, HPC, collections, archives and other knowledge resources.

Besides the examples stated in the ESFRI Roadmap (see **III**), see examples of successful proposals included in the National Roadmaps for Research Infrastructures of other EU countries in the *Knowledge Repository of EuroRIs-Net+*:

<http://observatory.euroris-net.eu/euroris/files/subview?cat=TYPE&id=256&label=National%20Roadmap>

2. Why is inclusion in the National Roadmap important?

Inclusion in the roadmap will be a prerequisite for funding of Research Infrastructures within the Greek multi-annual plan for the programming period 2014-2020 (according to the ex-ante conditionality “1.2 - *The existence of a multi-annual plan for budgeting and prioritization of investments*”).

It is highly desirable that proposed Research Infrastructures rely on additional sources of funding (e.g. regional investment plans, private funds / grants and direct EC funding).

Note: Eligibility rules and financial details for co-funding of RIs through Structural Funds instruments within the *2014-2020 Partnership Agreement* are expected to be finalized prior to the 1st Call Announcement.

3. Will there be any revisions for the National Roadmap?

The National Roadmap should be updated regularly (first update is expected to take place in 2017). Projects submitted in the first round of the roadmap process that have not yet been implemented may be re-entered in the competition. The roadmap process itself and the implementation of the RI roadmap will be monitored by GSRT within the framework of the broader monitoring plan for the next programming period 2014 – 2020.

4. What is the contribution of the National Roadmap to the funding instruments & Calls schedule related to the implementation of Research Infrastructures?

The National Roadmap will be accompanied by a multi-annual plan mapping the investment needs related to Research Infrastructures for the period 2014-2020. Funding will be supported through specific instruments / calls related in priority to the research infrastructures mentioned herein. At least two calls for the implementation or further upgrade of Research Infrastructures of national relevance are expected through the period 2014 – 2020. There will be no minimum threshold for investment per proposal. The budget of the Calls will be determined according to the resources allocated to GSRT for this purpose, through Structural Funds. Modifications or adjustments – presumably also by area of research - will be assessed.

5. Which objectives does the roadmap pursue?

As described in the *Guidelines* document, the objectives of the National Roadmap are:

1 - To support the decision making process in compliance to strategic priorities in research, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of investment planning for Research Infrastructures, at national and regional levels

Decisions on investments in research infrastructures of national relevance should be taken in the context of an inclusive strategy which perceives research infrastructures as the main pillars of the knowledge triangle in Greece, driven by the stakeholder needs, as well as quality-based criteria. Early consideration of all projects across the various areas of science and potential hosting organisations is required to avoid duplicate investments, investment gaps or oversubscription of the funds available for investment. The Roadmap will be an instrument for blueprinting future calls on collaborative research infrastructures of national relevance through the use of Structural Funds and other funding sources.

2 – To support the development of an evidence based national strategy in the framework of international negotiations, linked to EU priorities and, where appropriate, the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures.

Due to broader financial and structural reasons, implementation of many large research infrastructures requires cooperation at the European or international level. The ESFRI process is an attempt to gain an overview of such projects and prepare a need- and quality-based short list.

However, it must be assumed that the implementation of projects will continue to depend on the formation of multilateral consortia consisting of EU member states, and where necessary other states, that agree upon variable geometry funding (in the EU context, the term ‘variable geometry’ refers to a model that allows for different degrees of participation in EU-level schemes by individual Member States). Hence, the preparation of a national priority list is not only an important factor at the national level, but also an important step towards the implementation of European or international projects.

Greek participation in ESFRI roadmap projects could be reinforced either through simple membership in organisations established at the European level, supporting the coordinated access of the broader Greek scientific community to European RIs and services or by strengthening the role of Greek participation via the establishment of ESFRI-related *Regional Partner Facilities* or *Regional Research Infrastructures* (regional hubs of European Added Value for Research Infrastructures).

6. Are there general recommendations for prioritization of Research Infrastructures of the National Roadmap?

The Research Infrastructures of the National Roadmap should, in priority, fulfill all of the three following conditions:

- i. Research Infrastructures of National Relevance
- ii. Research Infrastructures with competitive advantage at the international level
- iii. Research Infrastructures providing access to researchers originating from academic institutions, research centers and industry (if applicable), both at the national, regional and international level:
This could bring a significant added value in terms of exploitation of human potential and integration of existing infrastructures.

Moreover, in relation to ESFRI participation:

- ✓ Research Infrastructures linked to *international leadership projects* – incl. ESFRI (e.g. in the areas of e-infrastructures, biology, micro-electronics, energy, laser), should be encouraged, given that there is a clear benefit for the dynamics of a critical mass in Greece and its competence in specific scientific fields
- ✓ In particular cases, research infrastructures should fulfill criteria which can support their operation as a *Regional Research Infrastructure* related to international or pan-European Research Infrastructures.

7. Who can submit proposals for Research Infrastructures to be included in the National Roadmap?

The process followed is a bottom-up process. Submission of proposals at this phase (2nd Phase) should follow the 1st Phase process. Therefore, only proposers of the 1st Phase may submit 2nd Phase proposals as follow-up of their initial expressions of interest. Minor revisions of scope and consortium membership are welcome.

In the 2nd Phase the content of each proposal will be further described in detail, according to the elements required for evaluation, but without major changes in its scientific context. To be considered for evaluation, all proposals submitted at this phase should be accompanied by *endorsement letters* by all partners of the RI Consortium (signed by the **legal representative** of their organization e.g. University Rector or Research Center Director). Endorsement letters in Greek are also acceptable.

8. Is it possible for an organization / institution to participate to more than one proposal?

Research organizations and institutions can participate in more than one proposal. Proposals should properly address the requirement for establishing a critical mass of key stakeholders, aiming to intensify clustering of relevant research communities and innovation resources around the proposal consortium.

9. How are “single sited” infrastructures defined at the national level?

For single sited infrastructures there should be a single site (location of the research infrastructure) which hosts the research facility (incl. access services). This fact does not exclude the existence of a national, distributed network for the support of the infrastructure. This model provides economies of scale and improved operation of the research infrastructure, based on international standards.

10. Are new MoUs necessary for the existing ESFRI – related consortia and related national networks

For ESFRI related networks, existing MoUs may be submitted at this phase. For national networks other than ESFRI-related ones, MoUs will be required after the completion of the 1st Thread (Scientific and Technical Merit and Innovation Potential) and only for proposals having attained a grade ≥ 4 .

11. How is the “management” of the RI defined, in relation to its “governance” (Part A - Section 13)?

A clearly defined management scheme for the governance of the research infrastructure should be provided, with concrete roles – if possible – among main partners. The current process should provide indications for:

- The role of a main *host facility*
- The role of auxiliary *partner facilities* (in case of distributed infrastructures)
- The role of the *main users* of the facilities

In general, the Research Infrastructures should operate as units with their own administrative structure. Relevant information should be filled in appropriate sections of Part A.

12. Are there different criteria for evaluation of integrated research infrastructures and new research infrastructures?

All RI proposals to be considered for inclusion in the roadmap should obtain a grade of at least 4 in the four groups of criteria according to the evaluation of their scientific and technical merit and innovation potential, as specified in the Guidelines document.

Note that a major goal of this roadmap is the enforcement of synergies within established stakeholder communities. As such, emphasis is placed on the integration of research facilities, including necessary upgrades for seamless user access and coordination at the national level.

13. Will there be common evaluation of Research Infrastructures of national relevance and RIs participating in international projects?

The process suggested for the evaluation of the proposals for the National Roadmap for Research Infrastructures implies the existence of *common criteria* for all scientific areas and types of projects. The inclusion of the criterion of international cooperation at the *effective networking* dimension of evaluation will boost the value of participation of Greece in international collaborations (including ESFRI projects).

14. Can international partners participate in the consortia?

International collaborators (assigned as *affiliated partners*) may have specific roles in the governance model and I3 activities, but without any funding request through Structural Funds.

15. Can industrial partners participate in the consortia?

Cooperation with industrial organizations / private sector is strongly encouraged. Industrial collaborators in RIs can be technology providers or main users of the RI, promoting scientific and technological breakthroughs, supporting innovation and improved quality of services provided by the Research Infrastructures. However, direct funding through Structural Funds is under Competition Law scrutiny and should abide by evolving State-Aid EU and National regulations.

16. Is cross-border cooperation significant?

Multi-national RIs of regional coverage, in the sense of a broader region (e.g. the Balkans, East Mediterranean) where Greek regions may have established cooperation, should be identified and analyzed separately as their role is important. Research Infrastructures enabling significant *cross-border cooperation* should be linked to relevant RIS3 priorities.

17. Are Research Infrastructures similar to service – providing laboratories to industry?

Research Infrastructures provide access services to research facilities; therefore they should be differentiated from laboratories which provide production services to the private sector. Industry may have access to Research Infrastructures for research and innovation purposes, possibly with fees which can partially support their sustainability.

18. What kind of Joint Research Activities can be described in Part B?

The description of the I3 model and the relevant Networking, Service & Joint Research Activities is given in Annex III and IV of the *Guidelines* document, along with characteristic examples. More specifically, *Joint Research activities* refer to research related to the deployment of the RI (e.g. novel technologies, devices, toolkits and other facilities aimed at improving the services provided by the RI, including advanced features for the RI operation).

19. Are construction costs eligible for funding?

Investment costs related to the construction of buildings, grounds and large vessels that might be necessary to support shared facilities – accessible to all stakeholders – are in principle not eligible for support within the context of the Research Infrastructures Roadmap through GSRT co-funding. Capital costs related to necessary adaptation and integration of facilities (related to SAs or JRAs) could be eligible, together with operational costs of the shared facilities.

20. What is meant by additional funding sources?

Deployment and operation of Research Infrastructures should combine several funding instruments and sources. Structural Funds from GSRT and Regional Operational Programmes will be the main funding sources. If available, National funds should supplement Structural Funds for the main / auxiliary facilities of the RIs. Additional funding sources for the investment and operational costs may include *external grants* acquired by the host organizations (e.g. EC infrastructure grants, private donations). External co-funding should include cost-based *access fees* from users (e.g. research projects) which can partially support the operational costs of the RI.

21. Is there a need for a financial plan?

The financial estimates should be completed on the basis of annual expenses per cost category and per funding source (approximate values). Wherever feasibility studies are available, please mention relevant data. A realistic financial plan with relevant justification should be proposed, if possible. Operational costs may include personnel, administrative costs and fixed costs / basic utilities etc. Proposers should mention whether VAT or overheads are included in their calculations.

22. Are there specific budgetary restrictions?

At this point, there are no specific upper limits or lower thresholds on RI budgets. Approximate estimations based on the international experience and preparatory phase predictions indicate a range of 3-15M Euros of GSRT co-funding per nation-wide RI. In exceptional cases, well documented proposals might reach up to approximately 50M Euros in total of GSRT co-funding.

Please note that, based on MERIL (Mapping of European Research Infrastructures Landscape) estimations the GDP level of pre-crisis Greece justifies up to 15-20 nation-wide RIs.

23. Is there any EC-based framework for access rules for RIs?

Access conditions / rules should be explicitly defined in the relevant sections. An EC-document related to access policy for Research Infrastructures is provided in [II](#).

24. Are there specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which should be mentioned in proposals?

Proposers should themselves identify proposal-specific KPIs which should be linked to RI outputs (without any restrictions / specifications).

25. Is the sum of I3 activity budgets equal to the total budget of the RI?

Yes, the I3-compliant activities' budget (as described in Part B) should be *equal* to the total budget of the proposed Research Infrastructure. In terms of construction funding, GSRT co-funding will be used only to upgrade and adapt buildings & building ground facilities to host the proposed RIs. Partners should identify funding sources, private or public, for potential land acquisition and construction of new buildings (e.g. in SA type of activities).

26. Is it necessary for all applications to include Part A - Section 15 data?

This section should be filled in *ONLY* for ESFRI related projects.

Enquiries

Please direct any general enquiries regarding evaluation process of Research Infrastructures for a National Roadmap to:

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