



## Milestone 9.1: Description of application, review and selection process for TNA to ATMO-ACCESS facilities

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# 1 Introduction

This document is prepared in the context of the ATMO-ACCESS project (Solutions for Sustainable Access to Atmospheric Research Facilities), which represents the organized contribution of distributed atmospheric research facilities for developing a pilot for a new model of Integrating Activities. The project will deliver a series of recommendations for establishing a comprehensive and sustainable framework for access to distributed atmospheric Research Infrastructures (RI), ensuring integrated access to and optimised use of the services they provide. Recommendations will build also on the experience, feedback and areas of improvements coming from Transnational Access (TNA) realized in the project to test the harmonized access procedures and cross-RI access modalities and services developed.

ATMO-ACCESS will support the trans-national, physical and remote access to 43 operational European atmospheric research facilities, including training, as well as some joint activities to facilitate and integrate the access procedures, to improve the services the infrastructures provide and offer innovative cross-RI services.

The TNAs planned in the project will follow the access process described here. The document includes the list of the facilities that are involved in TNA provision since the project start and gives details on the promotion of calls and access opportunities, user application process, user evaluation and selection, support to access, and post-access requirements. In the initial phase, TNAs will be coordinated mainly through offline exchanges between the actors involved in the process and with tools adapted from those developed in previous/ongoing integrated activities. During the project, the TNA management system will be optimized with the use of an online, centralized access management platform.

The document is structured in 8 different sections. After this introduction, Section 2 provides a general description of the TNA activities planned in the project. Section 3 presents the modalities of access under the project, with the main rules to be respected and how these are implemented in ATMO-ACCESS. Section 4 details all steps in the ATMO-ACCESS TNA management process. Section 5 focuses on the activities to ensure the carbon footprint assessment of the TNA realized in the project. Section 6 describes the coordinated user helpdesk function. Section 7 lists all the access-related templates and forms that are (and will be) produced to support and ease TNA management.

The terminology used in this document is in line with the EU Charter for Access to Research Infrastructure. The references consulted are given in section 8.

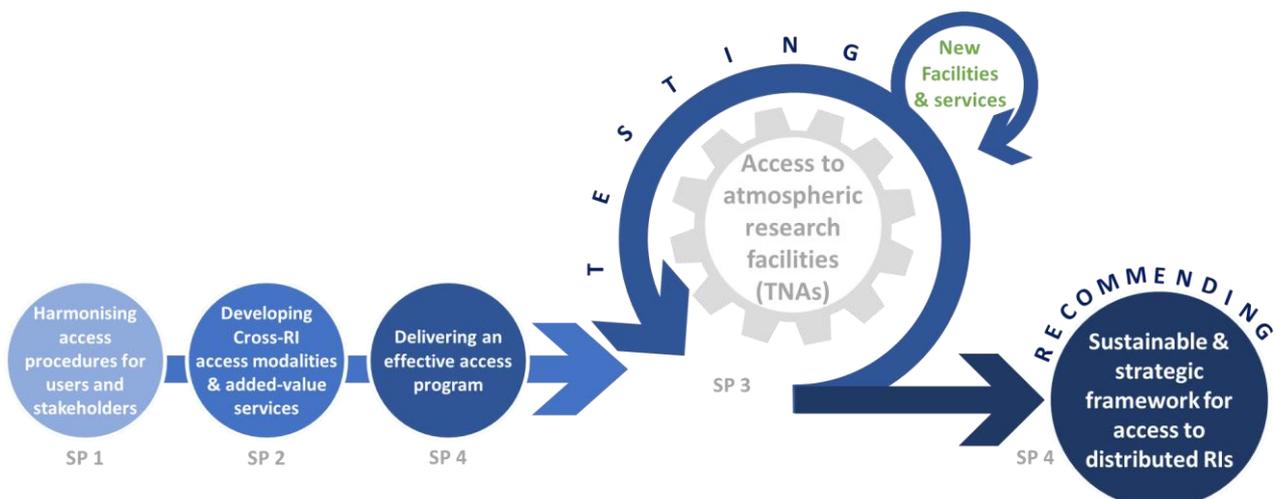
## 2 ATMO-ACCESS TNA activities

TNA activities within the ATMO ACCESS project serve two main objectives:

- a) to provide coordinated open physical and remote access to state-of-the-art facilities and services in atmospheric RIs and further enhance their range of products;
- b) to test and evaluate:
  - joint activities improving the services that the infrastructures provide, such as:
    - joint training services developed in WP4 to add the training dimension to the RIs accesses;
    - innovative cross-RI cloud services, addressing the management of data produced via access and the use of new, integrated data products, developed in WP5;
    - novel flexible trans-national access modalities, developed in WP6 building on synergies and complementary capabilities in the RIs and addressing the needs of specific users,
  - activities to facilitate and integrate the access procedures and service provision, in order to contribute to a new scheme for sustainable access featuring optimized user interaction, access workflows and management with demonstrated functionality, feasibility, and efficiency of the access concept.

**Figure 1** below presents the role and use of TNA activities in the project, which is to test the harmonized access procedures studied in the Strategic Pillar 1 “Harmonising access procedures for users and stakeholders” (SP1) as well as the cross-RI access modalities and services developed in SP2 “Cross-RI innovative modalities for access”. These will feed and converge in the access program designed in SP4 “Suited options for sustainable access” by WP7 “Delivering an effective TNA-VA Access Programme”.

Results and feedback from the TNA testing will provide the basis for developing in SP4, especially by WP8 “Sustainable and strategic framework for access to distributed atmospheric research infrastructures”, the recommendations about the strategic framework for access to distributed RIs.



*Figure 1. Role of TNA activities in ATMO-ACCESS*

## 2.1 Quantity of access provided in ATMO-ACCESS and Facilities involved

Within the ATMO-ACCESS project **10,427 access units** will be offered to users via both physical access (PA) and remote access (RA).

Forty-three facilities belonging to ACTRIS, IAGOS and ICOS participate in the TNA activities since the beginning of the project, namely:

- 22 Observational Facilities (OF), ground-based stations for long-term observations of atmospheric constituents that deliver long-term data based on a regular measurement schedule and common operation standards.
- 14 Simulation Chamber Facilities (SC), used to perform dedicated experiments under controlled conditions
- 4 Mobile Facilities (MF), and
- 3 singular Central Laboratories (CL, while 9 additional CL are co-located with 7 OF, 1 CF, 1 MF).

**Table 1** below delivers the list of facilities involved in TNA provision in ATMO-ACCESS including details on their type, the units of access applied, access type, estimated number of users and user projects.

Access provider short name	Short name of infrastructure	Installation <sup>1</sup>		Facility Type	Country	Access Type	Unit of <sup>2</sup> access	Min. quantity of access to be provided	Estimated number of users	Estimated number of projects
		#	Short name							
CNRS	SIRTA-Obs	1	SIRTA-Obs_CNRS	OF	FR	PA/RA	UWD	277	100	50
CNRS	SIRTA- CCRES-ACMCC	1	SIRTA- CCRES-ACMCC_CNRS	OF/CL	FR	PA/RA	UWD	150	55	45
CNRS	CESAM	1	CESAM- CNRS	SC	FR	PA	DAY	81	32	8
CNRS	OPAR	1	OPAR- CNRS	OF	FR	PA	DAY	160	30	15
CNRS	CO-PDD	1	CO-PDD- CNRS	OF	FR	PA	UWD	250	24	8
CNRS	HELIOS	1	HELIOS	SC	FR	PA	DAY	80	16	8
CEA	SIRTA-Obs	2	SIRTA-Obs_CEA	OF	FR	PA/RA	UWD	277	100	50
CEA	SIRTA- CCRES-ACMCC	2	SIRTA- CCRES-ACMCC_CEA	OF/CL	FR	PA/RA	UWD	150	55	45
CEA	ICOS ATC	1	ICOS ATC	CL	FR	PA	SWD	234	18	6
EP	SIRTA-Obs	3	SIRTA-Obs_EP	OF	FR	PA/RA	UWD	277	100	50

<sup>1</sup> "Installation" means a part or a service of a research infrastructure that could be used independently from the rest. A research infrastructure consists of one or more installations.

<sup>2</sup> The unit of access is identified by the access providers and is used to measure the total quantity of access that the facility provides to all its users. Most used ones are: user working day (UWD, that is one working day spent by one user at the facility to access the services), staff working day (SWD, one labour day required by the facility staff person to provide the access to the services), working day (DAY, independent from the number of users/staff).

EP	SIRTA-CCRES-ACMCC	3	SIRTA- CCRES-ACMCC_EP	OF/CL	FR	PA/RA	UWD	150	55	45
UCA	CO-PDD	2	CO- PDD-UCA	OF	FR	PA	UWD	250	24	8
UPEC	CESAM	2	CESAM- UPEC	SC	FR	PA	DAY	81	32	8
UR	OPAR	2	OPAR-UR	OF	FR	PA	DAY	160	30	15
UVSQ	SIRTA-Obs	4	SIRTA-Obs_UVSQ	OF	FR	PA/RA	UWD	277	100	50
UVSQ	SIRTA- CCRES-ACMCC	4	SIRTA- CCRES-ACMCC_UVSQ	OF/CL	FR	PA/RA	UWD	150	55	45
CNR	CIAO	1	CIAO	OF/CL	IT	PA	UWD	293	36	18
CNR	CMN-PV	1	CMN-PV	OF	IT	PA/RA	UWD	220	72	22
INFN	ChAMBRe	1	ChAMBRe	SC	IT	PA	DAY	120	24	12
TROPOS	MEL	1	MEL	OF	DE	PA	UWD	112	24	4
TROPOS	WCCAP	1	WCCAP	CL	DE	PA/RA	SWD	131	40	40
TROPOS	ACD-C / LACIS-T	1	ACD-C / LACIS-T	SC	DE	PA	DAY	82	15	5
TROPOS	LACROS	1	LACROS	MF	DE	PA/RA	SWD	60	15	5
FZJ	SAPHIR / SAPHIR-PLUS	1	SAPHIR / SAPHIR- PLUS	SC	DE	PA	DAY	40	20	5
KIT	AIDA	1	AIDA	SC/CL	DE	PA	DAY	48	24	6
BUW	QUAREC-ASC	1	QUAREC- ASC	SC	DE	PA	DAY	122	16	8
FMI	FMI PAL-SOD	1	FMI PAL- SOD	OF	FI	PA	UWD	250	130	13
FMI	FCoMLab	1	ICOS-Lab	MF/CL	FI	PA/RA	DAY	50	1	1
FMI	FCoMLab	3	CMLab	MF	FI	PA/RA	DAY	60	1	1
UHEL	SMEAR II	1	Hyytiälä	OF	FI	PA/RA	UWD	380	60	30
UEF	KASC	1	KASC	SC	FI	PA	DAY	50	8	5
TAU	FCoMLab	2	ATMO-Lab	MF	FI	PA/RA	DAY	28	4	4
PSI	JFJ	1	JFJ	OF	CH	PA	UWD	250	21	7
PSI	PACS-C2	1	PACS-C2	SC	CH	PA	DAY	71	24	12
EMPA	CIGAS-CH	1	CIGAS-CH	CL	CH	RA	SWD	124	17	17
TUD	CESAR	2	CESAR- Obs-TUD	OF	NL	PA/RA	UWD	151	150	15

KNMI	CESAR	1	CESAR- Obs- KNMI	OF	NL	PA/RA	UWD	151	150	15
RUG	CESAR	4	CESAR- Obs- RUG	OF	NL	PA/RA	UWD	151	150	15
UU	CESAR	3	CESAR-Obs-UU	OF	NL	PA/RA	UWD	151	150	15
UU	CESAR	5	CESAR-Isotope	OF	NL	PA/RA	SWD	750	100	100
ULUND	HTM	1	HTM	OF	SE	PA/RA	SWD	60	16	8
NOA	FKL	1	FKL	OF	EL	PA	UWD	210	48	12
NOA	ATMOS	1	ATMOS- NOA	OF	EL	PA	UWD	214	48	12
NCSR	ATMOS	2	ATMOS- NCSR-D	OF	EL	PA	UWD	214	48	12
FORTH	FORTH-MSC	1	FORTH- MSC	MF	EL	PA/RA	DAY	80	8	5
INOE	RADO	1	RADO	OF/CL	RO	PA/RA	SWD	283	30	20
UAIC	ESC-Q-UAIC	1	ESC- Q-UAIC	SC	RO	PA	DAY	80	16	8
UCC	IASC	1	IASC	SC	IE	PA	DAY	100	11	7
UNIMAN	MAC	1	MAC	SC	UK	PA	DAY	120	16	8
CEAM	EUPHORE	1	EUPHORE	SC	ES	PA/RA	DAY	64	21	6
AEMET	ISAF	1	ISAF-Obs	OF/CL	ES	PA/RA	SWD	116	33	22
AEMET	ISAF	2	ISAF-Cal		ES	PA/RA	SWD	40	40	40
UGR	AGORA	1	AGORA	OF	ES	PA/RA	SWD	205	32	16
CSIC	BCN	1	BCN_IN SITU	OF	ES	PA/RA	UWD	110	40	10
UPC	BCN	2	BCN_ARS	OF	ES	PA/RA	UWD	90	40	10
CYI	USRL	1	USRL	MF	CY	PA/RA	DAY	140	40	20
CYI	CAO	1	CAO	OF	CY	PA	DAY	120	30	15
UW	WOS	1	WOS	OF	PL	PA/RA	SWD	610	25	15
AU	AURA	1	AURA	SC	DK	PA	DAY	50	8	5
CHMI	NAOK	1	NAOK-CHMI	OF	CZ	PA	UWD	130	14	14
GCRI	NAOK	3	NAOK-GCRI	OF	CZ	PA	UWD	130	14	14
ICPF	NAOK	2	NAOK-ICPF	OF	CZ	PA	UWD	130	14	14

MU	NAOK	4	NAOK-MU	OF	CZ	PA	UWD	130	14	14
ZAMG	SBO	1	SBO	OF	AT	PA/RA	SWD	82	36	12
UEvora	EVASO	1	EVASO	OF	PT	PA	UWD	70	14	7

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*Table 1. Overview of the facilities involved in ATMO-ACCESS and details on the access provided*

The number of facilities providing TNA can increase during the project with new facilities selected based on their uniqueness and the clear added value/innovation of services. The selection criteria and procedures will be decided by the project Scientific Steering Committee.

### 3 Modalities of access under ATMO ACCESS

Access provision within the project complies with the rules for TNA prescribed the H2020 regulations (see section 3.1).

TNA is provided in two types:

- a) in person (physical access), with users physically visiting the facility/installation and receiving the service “hands-on”
- b) remotely (remote access), with resources and services offered without users physically visiting the facility/installation.

A flexible access type is recommended to providers considering the evolving pandemic situation. Facilities are encouraged to seek to adapt to remote access as much as possible, with the possibility to shift to remote provisioning in case new waves of Covid-19 and its variants impose further restrictions on mobility.

Remote access projects could be carried out by the host facility staff, with the external user supervising the operations remotely. A plain agreement between the TNA provider and the user on the work to be done and the respective roles guides the successful completion of the remote access project.

ATMO-ACCESS WP6 will design new flexible trans-national access modalities to be tested and implemented during the project. New modalities will build on synergies and complementary capabilities in the RIs and address the needs of specific users (international stakeholders, public and private sector users) including for instance:

- (i) simultaneous access at numerous observational platforms,
- (ii) combined or sequential access to exploratory and observational platforms,
- (iii) the combined use of mobile and observational platforms,
- (iv) fast-track access.

### 3.1 Rules for access under H2020

Article 16 of the ATMO-ACCESS Grant Agreement reports the EU rules for providing trans-national access to research infrastructures. These obligations are contractual requirements, whose breaches can result in the ineligibility of the costs of access, with the consequent rejection of the costs and the reduction of the grant.

Complying with these obligations, TNA to facilities or installations has to meet the following conditions:

- a) Regarding the *access to be provided*:
  - It must be free of charge, trans-national access to research infrastructure or installations for selected user-groups.
  - It must include the logistical, technological and scientific support and the specific training that is usually provided to external researchers using the infrastructure.
  
- b) Regarding the *categories of users*:
  - Access must be provided to selected 'user-groups', i.e. teams of one or more researchers (users) led by a 'user group leader'.
  - The user group leader and the majority of the users must work in a country other than the country where the installation is located (Trans-nationality, affiliation matters).
  - User groups in which the majority of users work in non-EU or non-associated third countries may ONLY have access for up to 20% of the total number of units of access provided under the grant;
  - Only user groups that are allowed to disseminate the results may have access, unless the users are working for SMEs.
  - User groups have to be selected.
  
- c) Regarding the *process and selection of users*:
  - User groups are selected by a selection panel upon presentation of a description of the work they intend to carry out and details of the users.
  - The selection panel must be composed of international experts in the field, at least half of them independent from the beneficiaries of the project.
  - The selection panel must apply principles of transparency, fairness and impartiality and base its selection on the proposal merit.
  - Priority should be given to user groups composed of users who have not previously used the installation and are working in countries where no equivalent research infrastructure exists.

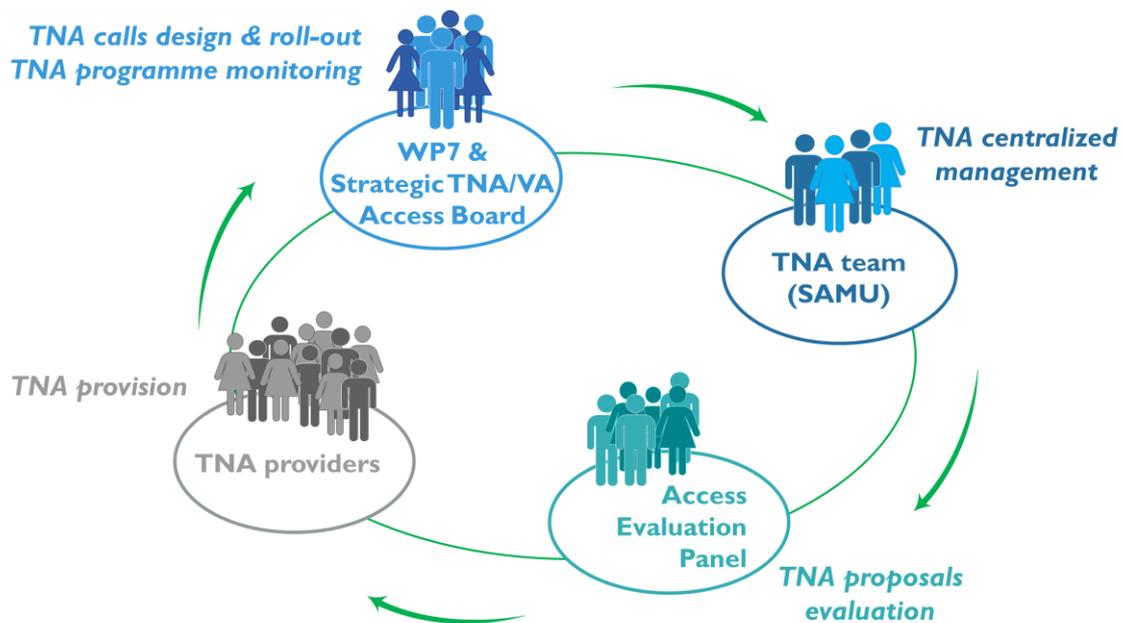
Finally, last but certainly not least, other general conditions to be met and actively pursued are:

- wide advertising of the access opportunities and
- active promotion of equal opportunities, taking into account the gender dimension when defining the support provided to users.

### 3.2 Implementation of the ATMO-ACCESS TNA programme

The implementation of the TNA programme in ATMO-ACCESS involves four main categories of actors:

1. The WP7 team, responsible for delivering an effective TNA-VA Access Programme, and the Strategic TNA/VA Access Board (STVB) established in WP7. In particular, the STVB decides on the nature and scope of the calls, as well as their scheduling. The STVB also assesses the results of the call strategy for improvements and recommendations.
2. The project TNA Team in WP9, in charge of managing the TNA.
3. The Access Evaluation Panel (AEP), a large panel of mainly independent experts that is mobilized for independent reviewing of TNA projects proposed by the users, based on their expertise.
4. The TNA providers, that is, the facilities/installations responsible for serving the users selected for TNA.



**Figure 2.** TNA implementation in ATMO-ACCESS

### 3.2.1 Centralized management

Within ATMO-ACCESS, the TNA provision also serves, among others, the purpose of testing and consolidating cross-RI operations, including the provision of access in a coordinated manner between the three different atmospheric RIs. To this end, a centralized TNA management with a single reference for users is implemented, with all activities involving the provision of access to facilities concentrated with a specific team and organized by it.

The TNA Team in WP9 represents the main interface between all key actors involved in the physical and remote access programme implementation (users, access providers, review panel members).

The TNA Team is largely made up of staff from the ACTRIS SAMU<sup>3</sup> and is responsible for organizing and directing all the main steps of the access provision process (application, proposal management, review and selection, approval, access monitoring).

<sup>3</sup> The Service and Access Management Unit of the ACTRIS Head Office.

In particular, the TNA Team takes care of:

- Informing and assisting users all throughout the process
- Receiving the TNA requests and checking the eligibility according to H2020 criteria
- Liaising with TNA providers, users and review experts
- Communicating eligible requests to providers for feasibility check
- Coordinating the review and selection process, establishing and instructing the review panel
- Informing the applicants on the acceptance or rejection of their requests, or on any revision that is needed to the application
- Monitoring the user access and service provision,
- Monitoring access results, gathering user reports and feedback, collecting access metrics notably to report to the European Commission
- Coordinating the user helpdesk function (see next section 6) ensuring tiers 0-1.

### 3.2.2 *Access management platform*

At the beginning of the project, the TNA process will be managed mainly “offline” with emails and documents exchanges between the users, the TNA team receiving the requests, the TNA providers, and the review experts.

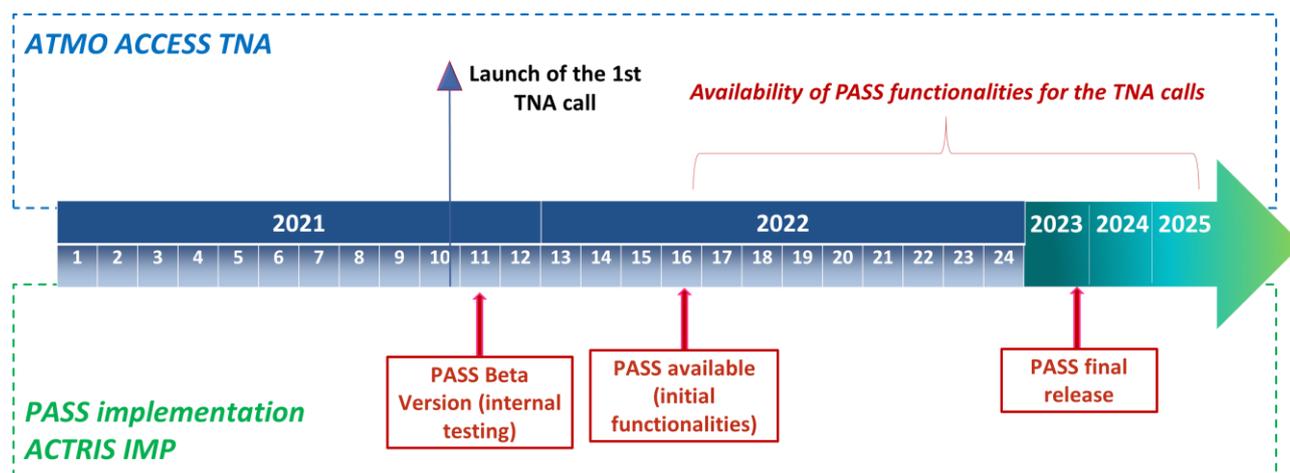
The TNA management will be optimized during the project thanks to an online access management platform. The platform<sup>4</sup> is currently being implemented in ACTRIS by the SAMU and will be made available to ATMO-ACCESS as soon as possible.

New features are being studied and designed to meet the ATMO-ACCESS TNA management needs. The integration of such functionalities into the ACTRIS PASS will allow separate and dedicated management of the ATMO-ACCESS TNA proposals with complete control of the selection process.

The tentative timeline for the availability and use of the platform in ATMO-ACCESS is presented in **Figure 3**.

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<sup>4</sup> The ACTRIS PASS – Platform for managing user access to ACTRIS ServiceS.



**Figure 3.** ACTRIS PASS implementation timeline

The use of the ACTRIS PASS will streamline and facilitate the internal workflows and the overall process described in section 4.

### 3.2.3 Establishment of the Access Evaluation Panel - AEP

The review of TNA proposals from users is entrusted to members of the Access Evaluation Panel. The AEP is a large pool of experts, mainly external from the ATMO-ACCESS Beneficiaries and having diverse expertise and experience in the relevant fields from which reviewers are drawn to serve on review panels for the single proposals.

The process for the AEP establishment is coordinated by the TNA Team in WP9 with the support of the Project Office. The AEP is established drawing from reviewers listed on expert databases already developed in past projects (ACTRIS-2, EUROCHAMP-2020), supplemented by suggestions of possible candidates from TNA providers and from the ATMO-ACCESS Scientific Steering Committee (SCC).

Considering the vast amount of access planned in the project, and the consequent need to involve a large number of experts with the necessary experience and technical capacity, a call for volunteer experts will be published and stay open to collect volunteer candidates and increase the list of experts.

The members of the AEP act in honorary capacity.

A specific Terms of Reference (ToR) for the ATMO-ACCESS AEP (see section 7) details the reviewer task, roles and responsibilities. It serves to inform experts of the effort required of them and the terms of work (e.g., confidentiality, impartiality, conflicts of interest, etc.).

ATMO-ACCESS TNA Evaluation guidelines will orient the merit assessment of TNA proposals, describing the general evaluation process and main criteria applied. Further, specific criteria and workflows could be introduced to meet the particular objectives and types of the calls, allowing testing and implementing the new access methods developed by WP6.

The invited experts who have accepted to become members of the AEP will be officially nominated by the ATMO-ACCESS General Assembly.

## 4 ATMO-ACCESS TNA process

The ATMO-ACCESS TNA process is a harmonized access process uniformly implemented for all facilities and installations of the three atmospheric RIs offering services to users within the project.

**Figure 4** below presents the ATMO-ACCESS TNA workflow with all the main steps in the process.

The process involves, with different roles depending on the specific task:

- a) the ATMO-ACCESS Work Package 9 TNA Team
- b) the ATMO-ACCESS Work Package 7
- c) the ATMO-ACCESS Work Package 2
- d) the ATMO-ACCESS TNA providers
- e) the user proposing TNA
- f) the ATMO-ACCESS Access Evaluation Panel (AEP)
- g) the ATMO-ACCESS Strategic TNA/VA Access Board (STVB)

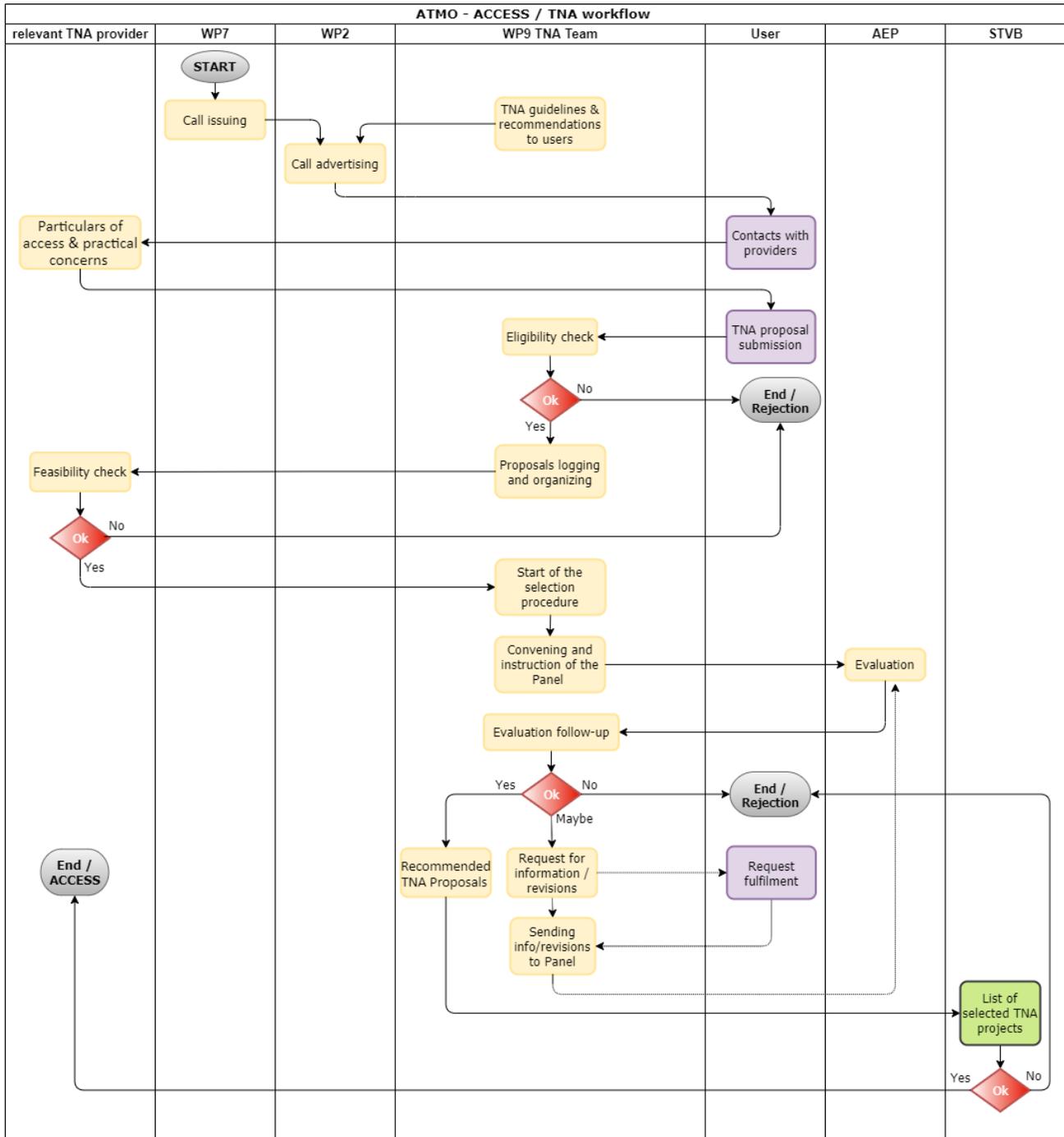


Figure 4. ATMO-ACCESS TransNational Access management workflow

The sections that follow detail each workflow component, meaning the single activities, actions, interactions, and transitions for each step in the process.

The evaluation and selection of the TNA requests shall be completed within about 4-6 weeks of submission provided that:

- a) the users and the facilities have already discussed the technical and scientific details of the project before the formal submission of the application, and

- b) no complex integrations or clarifications are requested to users by reviewers.

The WP9 TNA Team and all the actors involved in the process do everything possible to ensure that the selection takes as little time as possible. In exceptional cases (e.g. unavailability of auditors), it may take longer before the evaluation results are available.

The entire process and the timing here described in general terms may undergo variations to respond to particular needs and circumstances that emerge from the program/content/objective and the type of calls, and to consent test and implementation of the new access modalities developed by WP6.

## 4.1 TNA Calls

The process starts with the publication of the TNA call following the programme decided in WP7 by the Strategic TNA/VA Access Board (STVB).

Indicatively, there may be:

- Continuous calls, probably three calls/year or an open call with specific periods for review, e.g., every two months, to make sure there are year-round possibilities to request access while keeping the selection competitive;
- Targeted calls, launched to promote specific research, new access modalities or services developed in the project
- Opportunities for fast-track access for exceptional or urgent cases or specific users (with a simplified and faster procedure).

The STVB in WP7 decides on the nature, focus, scope and time of the call, producing the call text and requirements for users.

Based on the call, the TNA Team eventually updates/adjusts the TNA guidelines, documents and recommendations to users.

## 4.2 Communication

The calls are published on the ATMO-ACCESS website along with guidelines and forms for applicants. TNA opportunities are widely advertised to reach all possible interested users, using different channels.

All communication is done in close and active collaboration with the communication offices of the three involved RIs. ATMO-ACCESS WP2 “Integrated modalities for engaging users, enhancing awareness and monitoring success of access strategies” is in charge of organizing the communication, taking care of announcing the calls, publicizing the installations offering access, raising the user awareness of all the opportunities offered under the grant and ensuring a wide dissemination of the results from access.

In all communication related to TNA calls and open opportunities, users are encouraged to contact the facilities directly to discuss practicalities and particulars of access before submitting the proposal. TNA providers should make sure that their facility website refers to the TNA opportunities offered by the ATMO-ACCESS project and links to its website: <https://www.atmo-access.eu/facilities/>

### 4.3 User application

To be selected for TNA within ATMO-ACCESS, users need to submit specific requests, in writing, providing details of the intended work as well as on the user group components. The users connect to the project website where they find complete information on the calls, description of all the available installations and services open for access, and the link to the application forms to be filled in and submitted by the user group leader.

The application form (possibly also different based on the type of service requested<sup>5</sup>) collects all the relevant information required from the users to allow adequate review and selection, among others:

- name, nationality and home institution of the users
- a description of the work that they wish to carry out
- dissemination plans
- description of users' estimated travel & subsistence costs

The application form will be integrated in the access management platform, when implemented. In the early stages an online Google form could be used for TNA proposal submission. Users can download a word/pdf version of it to become aware of the information they are asked to provide and the fields to complete.

Direct exchanges between the users and the TNA provider are encouraged to happen in this phase for the preparation of the proposal and until the request is officially submitted. After submission the users mostly have one interface, the WP9 TNA Team, to refer to for anything related to access until the actual service provision.

### 4.4 Eligibility check

The WP9 TNA team screens incoming proposals for formal compliance with the EU regulations (see previous section 3.1) based on the information included.

With the ACTRIS PASS available, it may be possible to perform automatic eligibility checks directly while the users complete the form, with real-time pop-up notifications letting them know why they are determined ineligible. This way, users can review their project and their group composition to meet the eligibility requirements.

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<sup>5</sup> Still to be decided, but possibly an Application form for customary technical services and an Application form for other scientific/technical services (see section 7).

Eligible proposals are registered with all relevant information so that a complete historical record is maintained.

Depending on the type of the call, applications could start to be processed shortly after they are received, which means that the period for the selection can begin immediately, with the actual provision of TNA starting soon after the conclusion of the review.

## 4.5 Feasibility check

TNA proposals are transferred to the TNA providers to ascertain the logistical feasibility and if they fit (for the proposed timing and requirements) in the relevant provider's availability, schedule and plans. With the ACTRIS PASS available, this evaluation step will be rapid and agile when users and suppliers discuss the access proposal before the formal application. If users and suppliers have not discussed the project before submission, the feasibility check takes longer and also covers the technical-scientific details.

TNA providers also evaluate the feasibility of contributing in part to users' travel and subsistence (T&S) expenses, based on the users' cost estimates and the available budget allocated to facilities specifically for TNA provision. The opportunity/feasibility of supporting part of the user's T&S costs and the amount of the contribution are decided on a case-by-case basis by the TNA providers with the support of the TNA Team after the TNA proposal is selected.

## 4.6 Review and Selection

The review and selection phase opens for each TNA proposal whose feasibility is confirmed by the TNA provider. The TNA Team takes care of notifying users of the start of the selection, providing details on the steps of the process and its expected timing.

Each TNA proposal shall be evaluated by an *ad-hoc panel* composed maximum of *three experts*, identified within the AEP based on their knowledge in the scientific or technical field that is the subject of the application to be reviewed.

Reviewers perform an individual evaluation of proposals remotely, judging the scientific/technical merit and completing individual assessment reports (with Google online forms at the beginning, then via the ACTRIS PASS Platform). Experts apply the principles of transparency, fairness and impartiality and use the review criteria summarized in section 4.6.1.

One *Rapporteur*, chosen among the three<sup>6</sup>, draws up a summary report of the individual assessments and formulates recommendations for the selection, possibly (and only where needed) following a remote consensus meeting directly arranged between them, if necessary.

TNA proposals recommended for selection by reviewers are forwarded to the Strategic TNA Access Board.

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<sup>6</sup> By the TNA Team and based on the independence criterion.

The STVB establishes the list of TNA/VA projects selected for support, applying the agreed priorities where needed.

The TNA Team notifies the final decision to selected users. Results of the call and the selection are announced through the web page of ATMO-ACCESS at agreed intervals.

#### 4.6.1 Review criteria

Proposals are evaluated against specific criteria that reflect the access modes and are detailed in the ATMO-ACCESS TNA Evaluation Guidelines. Review criteria cover, among others:

- **Scientific excellence**, considering the scientific and technical value, the originality and innovation, the relevance and impact of the project, the dissemination plan, the quality of the proposing user group etc.
- **Technical need-driven criteria** for increasing instrument performance (maintenance, calibration, QA) and operator training.
- **Market-driven aspects**, especially when access involves users from the private sector. In this case, the innovation potential of TNA proposals, possible technological developments as well as market developments and impacts on the economy are principally considered.

Additional transversal criteria considered, especially when deciding on possible prioritization, are:

- Collaboration and access to new users (new user profiles, new regions/countries, new domains and sectors)
- Training opportunities (involvement of young scientists)
- Gender equality promotion
- Interest of the ATMO-ACCESS Community (for example, for testing of new services developed/made available during the project)

## 4.7 Access, support and terms of use

Once the selection is concluded, the WP9 TNA Team invites the users of successful TNA proposals to contact the TNA providers to agree on and directly negotiate the final arrangements of the TNA implementation, including dates, support needed/provided, logistics and technical details of the TNA visit.

In view of the visit and during the access, users can count on:

- general assistance by the TNA Team in the liaison with providers and for needed formal accomplishments (User Acknowledgement Statement, TNA activity report, user questionnaires, etc. see section 4.7.1 and section 4.8);
- on-site assistance by the TNA provider, which includes the logistical, technological and scientific support and the specific training usually provided to external researchers using the infrastructure/installation;
- limited financial support for travel and subsistence, which is available to some extent upon request to the TNA provider. The amount and conditions of the financial contribution are established by

mutual agreement between the user and the TNA provider at the moment of arranging the visit. The TNA provider manages the refund according to the internal rules of his/her local institution.

#### 4.7.1 Access terms of use

The general terms of the access are established in the ATMO-ACCESS TNA User Acknowledgement Statement (see section 7) that the user needs to adhere to and subscribe to have access. These include, among others:

- Acknowledgment of the project and of the support from the European Commission in the Horizon 2020 Programme, in any publication resulting from work carried out in the context of the TNA Activity in ATMO-ACCESS.
- Confirmation that regarding to the specific TNA project granted under ATMO-ACCESS no double financing is taking place from other sources.
- Acceptance of post-access requirements (see section 4.8).

Facility-specific terms of use apply as well, and TNA providers are responsible for informing the users accordingly. TNA providers are warmly encouraged:

- a) to draw up their own document defining the specific requirements<sup>7</sup> under which they open their premises, resources and installations to external users for the purposes of TNA within the ATMO-ACCESS project.
- b) to inform the user or user group on the procedure and requirements for the reimbursement of the travel and daily subsistence allowance, as well as the cost associated to the visits which cannot be reimbursed by the access provider (if any).
- c) to keep track of and record the units of access provided. In particular, for remote access, it would be wise to keep proofs of the involvement of the users in the different steps and decisions during the access (e.g., minutes of the video discussions, agreed recording, etc.).

## 4.8 Post access requirements

After the completion of the access, some post-access requirements need to be accomplished completing documents (see section 7) to consent adequate access reporting and monitoring:

- a Confirmation of Access, which is to be signed by the TNA Provider, within 2 weeks after the access,
- an attestation of the performed TNA activity, within maximum 8 weeks. Depending on the type of service used (research, technical, innovation, training, or data service) the attestation can be in the form of:
  - an activity report presenting the TNA preliminary results (for research services, user accessing NFs);
  - specific calibration documents, or similar certificates confirming the service provided (for technical services, user accessing CLs);

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<sup>7</sup> Namely, procedures and specific measures of the hosting organizations related to access to facilities or parts of a facility, the use of equipment, required protection, safety regulations, adequate training, health and risks, insurance requirements, and any other terms.

- any other attestation presenting the innovation, training and/or data service provided<sup>8</sup>,
- a User feedback questionnaire to enable evaluating and recommending improvements of TNA operations and the access process, within 3 weeks after the access,
- information on access results (scientific publications and data),
- the User TNA carbon footprint assessment (see section 5).

Google forms or Word/Excel files emailed to the WP9 TNA Team are used in the initial TNA calls.

With the ACTRIS PASS available, the user will perform post-access requirements directly online, filling in a reporting form to provide a record of the user and project information, user details, project achievements, and any associated publications or dissemination activities. These details are necessary for a proper reporting of the access to the EC.

## 5 TNA carbon footprint assessment

Complying with the general ATMO-ACCESS Carbon footprint assessment strategy, TNA users are encouraged to reflect on the environmental impact of their research activity, to make informed choices in their day-to-day research life to lessen the personal impact on the environment and to contribute to measure the GHG emissions of the TNA access activities.

An informative webpage (<https://www.atmo-access.eu/carbon-footprint-assessment/>) provides all details on the project strategy, displaying also a decision tree to guide user choice between physical and remote access to have the lowest environmental impact.

Users from the TNA programme have to indicate in the TNA application whether they commit to engage in the carbon assessment task by monitoring their activities. TNA users who commit to the carbon assessment task are required to indicate relevant information about their travel mode and or online activities in case of remote access in the post-access report. In particular, TNA Team will request users to provide:

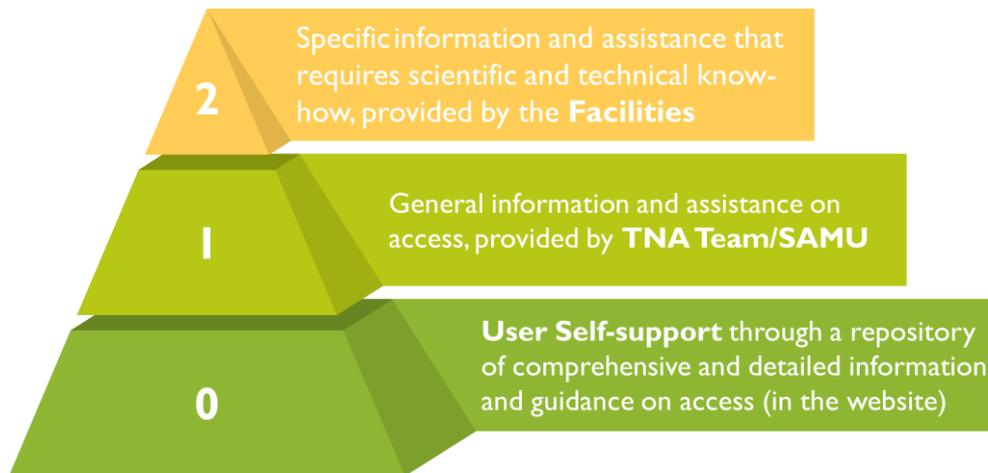
- a) for physical access: their departure and arrival locations and means of transport taken (air, train, car (fuel/hybrid/electric), bus) and if the trip was one way or return.
- b) for remote activities:
  - i. the participants (n), the estimated duration of the remote activity (min), if webcams were on/off and if screen sharing was on or off.
  - ii. Details on the shipment of equipment.

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<sup>8</sup> The possibility of general templates for these attestations (apart from the already available TNA Activity report) will be explored and studied in cooperation with WP1 and TNA providers.

## 6 ATMO-ACCESS User Helpdesk

ATMO-ACCESS users will be supported all through the TNA process with a multi-tier helpdesk function which involves both the TNA Team and the Facility providers.



*Figure 5. ATMO-ACCESS multi-tier user helpdesk function*

*Tier 0* is the ATMO-ACCESS TNA knowledge base, the online repository of resources (information, rules, guidelines, forms, instructions, glossaries and definition lists, tutorials both for users and providers, etc.) on access, which is available in a specific section of the website to users as self-support.

Among other sources of generic information and support, the knowledge base includes specific TNA handbooks for users and providers that make it easy for users and providers to find the information they need and solutions to their problems without having to ask for help and wait on an answer.

*Tier 1* is the helpdesk function performed by the TNA Team providing users general information and assistance related to the access process (applications, Terms of Reference, preliminary checks, evaluation), the access platform and support for all requests that are not related to science and do not need specific, technical know-how.

*Tier 2* is the specialized assistance offered by the TNA providers, who are responsible to handle and solve all support requests that are directly received by users during access or transferred to them by the TNA Team for proper solution when support concerns scientific and technical issues.

## 7 Access-related template documents

The following is a non-exhaustive, not definitive list of access-related forms and documents that will be used, both offline or online<sup>9</sup>, in the TNA management within ATMO-ACCESS.

<sup>9</sup> At first through Google, then through the ACTRIS PASS.

Some draft templates are already available, drawing from those used in previous projects<sup>10</sup> carried out by the participating RIs as adapted to fit the ATMO-ACCESS needs. Others are currently being defined and will be ready before the publication of the first TNA call. Drafts are widely shared with TNA providers and the project Scientific Steering Committee (SCC) to receive their input, contributions, and feedback before the final release, ensuring broad sharing.

Documents and forms will be periodically revised, when needed, to follow developments in the TNA programme, the TNA management system, the TNA calls.

- I. ATMO-ACCESS TNA Application form for customary technical services
- II. ATMO-ACCESS TNA Application form for other scientific/technical services
- III. Guidelines for ATMO-ACCESS TNA applicants
- IV. ATMO-ACCESS User TNA Handbook
- V. ATMO-ACCESS Provider TNA Handbook
- VI. Terms of Reference for ATMO-ACCESS AEP
- VII. ATMO-ACCESS- TNA Evaluation Guidelines
- VIII. Individual Evaluation Form/Report
- IX. TNA Proposals ranking list template
- X. Templates for standard communications to users, facilities and experts
- XI. ATMO-ACCESS TNA User Acknowledgement Statement
- XII. ATMO ACCESS Confirmation of Access
- XIII. ATMO-ACCESS User feedback questionnaire
- XIV. ATMO-ACCESS TNA activity report
- XV. ....

## 8 Reference documents

1. ATMO-ACCESS Grant Agreement (ID: 101008004).
2. [Definition of the pilot access process to ACTRIS facilities \(ACTRIS IMP Milestone MS7.1\)](#)
3. [ACTRIS Access Management Plan, 2nd Draft \(ACTRIS IMP Milestone MS6.5\)](#)
4. European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures: Principles and guidelines for access and related services. Publications Office of the European Union, 2015. ISBN: 978-92-79-45600-8, doi: 10.2777/524573, KI-04-15-085-EN-N.  
[https://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/pdf/2016\\_charterforaccessto-ris.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/pdf/2016_charterforaccessto-ris.pdf)
5. [ESFRI Roadmap 2021 Public Guide](#)
6. [H2020 Annotated Model Grant Agreement](#)

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<sup>10</sup> ACTRIS-2, EUROCHAMP-2020, ACTRIS IMP.