



H2020-INFRADEV-2019-2
Grant Agreement No 871043

DiSSCo Prepare WP4 – DL4.2

Future opportunities for DiSSCo's financial sustainability

Work package Leader: Michel Guiraud (MNHN)

Authors: Daniela Briffa¹, Angele Giuliano¹, Gael Lymer², Steve Robertshaw¹

Contributors/reviewers: Lisa French, Helen Hardy, Frederik Leliaert, Laurence Livermore, Stefaan Pijls

¹Across Limits. ² Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences.





Abstract

This report provides a preliminary identification of users and of market niches for potential DiSSCo services, to provide recommendations for future scoping and capacity building.

We summarize potential income diversification and the legal constraints on charging for services for DiSSCo-ERIC. Our compilation of the official statutes and annual activity reports of several ERICs, and the results of a consultation on the economic activities of eight ERICs, have shown the following:

- ERICs are encouraged to diversify their sources of incomes: It is fundamental for the sustainability of DiSSCo-ERIC to secure sources of income that will fund its activities in the long term. Ideally income streams will not only originate from European funding, and will be as diverse as possible.
- Two efficient ways to diversify the sources of income of ERICs are:
 1. to create interactions and partnerships between the ERIC and different stakeholders, both in the public and private sectors, at several levels (International, European, national & regional)
 2. to diversify the services provided by DiSSCo-ERIC and apply a charge to access them.

Both measures should increase the visibility of DiSSCo-ERIC and favor securing diverse income streams.

As long as the economic activities remain limited and do not jeopardize the achievement of the main tasks of DiSSCo-ERIC, there is no further constraint on charging for services in the legal texts framing ERICs. Other ERICs have not mentioned a maximum level of income from economic activities in their statutes, and it is suggested that DiSSCo-ERIC aligns with them. Two ERICs have declared aiming for 5% of income from commissioned services. Other consulted ERICs do not have an aim in terms of income from commissioned services but some may develop one in the future. Therefore 5% of income from commissioned services constitutes a basis for a model for DiSSCo-ERIC.

We recommend caution when deciding which users are charged for commissioned services. Our general recommendation is to not charge academic researchers, nor users from member and observer states (considering that the latter do pay an annual fee). Most ERICs charge users from other states and users from industry to access their services.

The sustainability of DiSSCo-ERIC (encompassing income diversification) could be organized within a 'sustainability plan' that could include the measures presented above and could be developed during the construction phase of the DiSSCo-ERIC.

Finally, we propose a Central Business Development team that would continue this work, trial some of the proposed business models, and manage a portfolio of income diversification projects and services.

Contribution to DiSSCo RI

DiSSCo Prepare Work Package 4 covers the development of DiSSCo's Business Framework, including the Cost Book for DiSSCo, developing cost models for chargeable services, the national contributions to the DiSSCo Research Infrastructure, and the pre-commercial procurement financial structure. Together, these support the Financial Readiness dimension which forms one of the five dimensions within the DiSSCo Prepare Implementation Readiness Levels, helping to prepare DiSSCo facilities to work towards understanding their costs, developing new revenue streams, closer financial alignment with DiSSCo, and benefiting from procurement at scale.

Keywords

business development, business framework, business models, commercial activity, DiSSCo services, ERIC statutes, financial readiness, income diversification



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01 Introduction

The European Research Infrastructure **DiSSCo** (Distributed System of Scientific Collections) aims to digitally unify all European natural history assets, to ensure that collection data are easily findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable (FAIR). This will transform a fragmented landscape of collections into an integrated knowledge base, enabling researchers to use and interconnect different collections. DiSSCo represents the largest ever formal agreement between natural history museums, botanical gardens and collection-holding research institutions and universities in the world.

DiSSCo officially launched its preparatory phase in February 2020 with the **DiSSCo Prepare** project (Horizon 2020)¹ which will run from February 2020 until January 2023, and is coordinated by Naturalis Biodiversity Center, the Netherlands. DiSSCo Prepare will be the primary vehicle through which DiSSCo will raise its overall readiness to favorably position itself for its construction and operation. Construction preparedness will be achieved by developing a comprehensive Construction Master Plan that will be based on the thorough and complete integration of critical implementation areas. Specifically, DiSSCo Prepare will:

(1) raise DiSSCo's Implementation readiness level (IRL) across the five following dimensions: scientific, technical, organizational, financial and data. This will enhance DiSSCo's ability to successfully execute construction and effect-related actions based on clear, actionable guidelines with minimum risks.

(2) deliver DiSSCo's Construction Masterplan. This comprehensive and integrated Masterplan will be the product of the outputs of all of its content related tasks and will be the project's final output. It will effectively serve as the organizational, scientific, financial and technical blueprint for the construction of the DiSSCo RI including establishing it as a legal entity.

1.1 Report Context

This report was written for DiSSCo Prepare Work Package 4 which focused on the development of [DiSSCo's Business Framework](#), specifically, Task 4.2 which had the aim to develop a "Cost model for charging services."

This report builds on the user stories and case studies compiled in DiSSCo Prepare (Fitzgerald et al, 2021a and 2021b) and the broader alignment of DiSSCo with other domain stakeholders (French et al, 2021), in conjunction with the service needs provisionally identified during the proposal stage of DiSSCo.

We present a preliminary identification of users and market niches within these services. It will then explore with potential users their needs and will identify the key elements where capacity building is required to propose or to implement into services in order to fulfill these needs and ensure that the offer matches demand.

¹ Distributed System of Scientific Collections - Preparatory Phase Project. Grant agreement ID: [871043](https://doi.org/10.3030/871043) <https://doi.org/10.3030/871043>

We describe potential income diversification activities as part of DiSSCo's services such as:

- Research subscription model;
- Open Access Model;
- An extension/re-orientation of the current loans and visits model;
- Charging Industry/Private Sector.

This includes the evaluation of legal possibilities for income diversification, and will also evaluate what the limits are to the opening of DiSSCo to the private sector (the security and privacy arrangements that govern access to this information). See also the [DiSSCo Data Management Plan](#) by Alonso and Koureas (2021).

Finally, these should be considered in the broader context of [DiSSCo's Project Management](#) which will cover the ethical aspects of DiSSCo development and the wider work on [DiSSCo's Business Framework](#).

02 Ecosystem Map

In order to better understand the business opportunities that the new DiSSCo ERIC will bring about, an ecosystem map has been created on the DiSSCo ERIC team's visual collaboration platform (Miro). This map is accessible to all DiSSCo members and is meant to be dynamic. This means that if any other business opportunities are identified after the original map is created, they can be added.

In essence, an ecosystem map is useful to any organization since it visualizes all the possible customers, internal and external players that come into contact with each other and influence business decisions that might need to be made. Mapping out these interactions helps to develop a better understanding of your organization from your customer's perspective, and allows you to find various opportunities for innovation or improvement within your organization.

The internal players identified within DiSSCo include the employees within DiSSCo institutions, who are experts related to digital modeling/digitisation, nature and biodiversity, and biodiversity impact assessment. The decision makers are the strategy group, while the most important group is the Central Business Development group. The function of the latter group will be explained in further detail in another section within this deliverable.

The external players include but are not limited to multipliers such as Chambers of Commerce and Industry within different sectors, environmental NGOs and local councils. Other potential external players include banks, Venture Capitalists (VCs), investors and investment groups, as well as organizations within the creative sector and national ministries. The European Commission is identified as a regulator.

Finally, the customers identified are numerous, most of whom are inspired by the business models developed thanks to the business development workshops carried out. These range from organizations and companies forming part of the gaming industry, to companies of investors, to organizations and companies within the robotics industry. The list also includes companies which focus on life cycle assessment, green consulting, and nature impact assessment.

A detailed explanation of the proposed Ecosystem map with the complete list of internal and external players and customers can be found in the [D4.2 DiSSCo Ecosystem Map.pptx.pdf](#) ([Supplementary File 1](#)).

03 Business Opportunities

Survey and Workshops

In order to better identify business opportunities for DiSSCo, a survey was conducted amongst member institutions of the DiSSCo Prepare consortium. This included questions on the current services that are being sold by partner institutions, the current income for specific commercial services, as well as perceptions on the new DiSSCo infrastructure.

Furthermore, a number of in depth interviews were carried out in a workshop format with some of the people who participated in the survey, to expand on certain topics such as alternative business potentials and possible ways of collaboration amongst individual institutions and the new DiSSCo infrastructure. The workshop participants were also invited to build their own business model, according to their experience within their partner institution.

Overall, the survey and the workshops demonstrated that the participants agreed with the idea of setting up a central business development function for the new DiSSCo ERIC legal entity. However, since this function is not currently included in the costbook deliverable, it will also need to be costed to account for the work to be undertaken by the core team employed/contracted by the ERIC. The central business development function will be tasked with finding, selling and promoting business opportunities for all DiSSCo members, in order to augment the teams of those members with an existing internal function, and support those who still do not have such a function.

The workshops and participants were also instrumental in coming up with some interesting options for services to be provided by the DiSSCo ERIC that had not been previously considered, but that really demonstrate the wide potential of working together across borders. Although these services might not directly use the e-services of DiSSCo, most of them can be provided thanks to the existence of the DiSSCo e-services. The e-services will be useful for the DiSSCo members, who will use them and build up on them to deliver value to the ultimate client.

Finally the suggested operational way of working seems practical with an “opt in” approach that allows entities to be as active or as passive as they want / can according to their availability at different times of the year. It is seen as positive by all interviewed as a good way to engage and move forward.

The full workshop report can be accessed here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dCu3IROIQeXVds61t21J5NIPRONVklutl_gN_a7LNI4/edit
(Supplementary File 2)

The full survey report was published as [DiSSCo Prepare Milestone 4.2](#) - see Robertshaw (2022).

Customer groups and business opportunities

Based on the survey and workshops outlined in the previous section, six business models are presented for consideration, ranked 1 - 6 in order of probability of generating income, with 1 being the highest. This probability is based on the size of that particular client market, combined with how well-established and connected in Europe this opportunity is. Therefore, for example, Business Model 1 has Financial Investment companies and Investment Firms as part of the customer segment, whereas Business Model 6 is more looking at individual enthusiasts.

These business models are based on the Osterwalder business model template². All the business models start from the center and move outwards.

In the center there is the **Value & Services** section. This is where one asks the question:

- *What value are we giving to our potential clients?*

Once that value has been defined, we move towards the right and ask three questions related to customers:

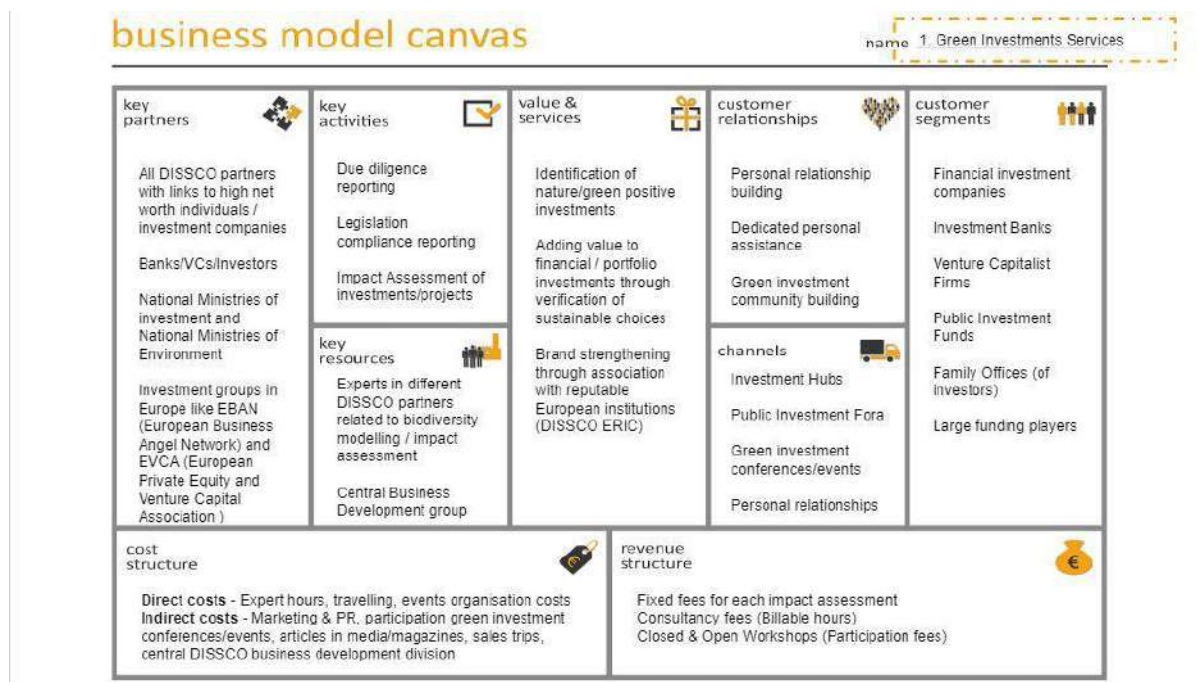
1. *Who are the customers? (Customer segments)*
2. *What sort of relationship do we want with them? (Customer relationships)*
3. *How do we find them? (Channels)*

Moving towards the left, we ask three further questions:

1. *What are the activities we need to do ourselves to deliver this service? (Key activities)*
2. *What resources do we require to deliver this service? (Key resources)*
3. *Who are the key (business) partners that we might need to collaborate with to reach the client or to deliver this service? (Key partners)*

All these sections are underpinned by costs on one side (**Cost structure**) and revenue on the other (**Revenue structure**).

Business model 1 - Green Investments Services



² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_Model_Canvas

Business model 1 - Summary and Analysis

This business model is ranked first since it has the highest chance at generating significant revenue.

The customers here are people who either have an investment company, or are well-off and would like to invest in particular companies. However, in order to be perceived in a good light, they need guidance on where best to invest.

Therefore, DiSSCo would provide services such as the identification of nature/sustainability positive investments, the added value to financial/portfolio investments through verification of sustainable choices, and brand strengthening through association with reputable European institutions.

DiSSCo will carry out due diligence reporting, legislation compliance reporting and Impact Assessment of investments/projects. These services will require experts in different DiSSCo partners related to biodiversity modeling/impact assessment as well as the Central Business Development group.

Key partners who could contribute to this provision of services include all DiSSCo partners with links to high net worth individuals/investment companies, banks, VCs, investors, national ministries of investment and national ministries of environment, and investment groups in Europe.

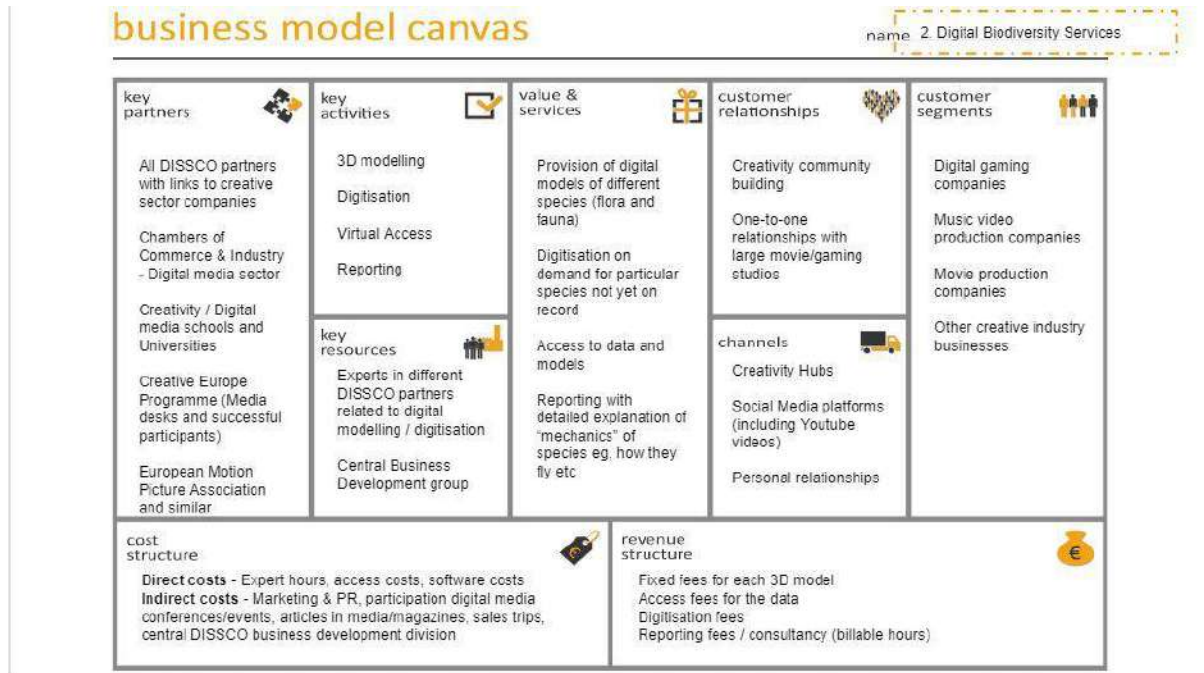
The revenue here is mainly fixed fees for each impact assessment, consultancy fees, as well as closed and open workshops.

The added value of DiSSCo for this business model is that it operates on a European level so the consultancy will not be limited to a particular country.

One issue with this service is that it could overlap with the services of [LifeWatch](#), another ERIC. However, without the data in the collections that DiSSCo has, it is very difficult to make accurate impact assessments. Moreover, at the moment, experts in DiSSCo institutions and LifeWatch are shared. Therefore, collaboration with LifeWatch could also be a possibility in order for this service to be provided. Another issue there could be with this business model is the fact that it is not directly in line with the core intention of DiSSCo, which is to make a wider range of data related to biodiversity available.

However, in order for DiSSCo to eventually become self-sustaining, this business model provides the highest potential for the generation of significant revenue.

Business model 2 - Digitization and the Creative Sector



Business model 2 - Summary and Analysis

This business model focuses more on digitisation in collaboration with the creative sector. Therefore, customers include digital gaming companies, music video production companies, movie production companies, and other creative industry businesses.

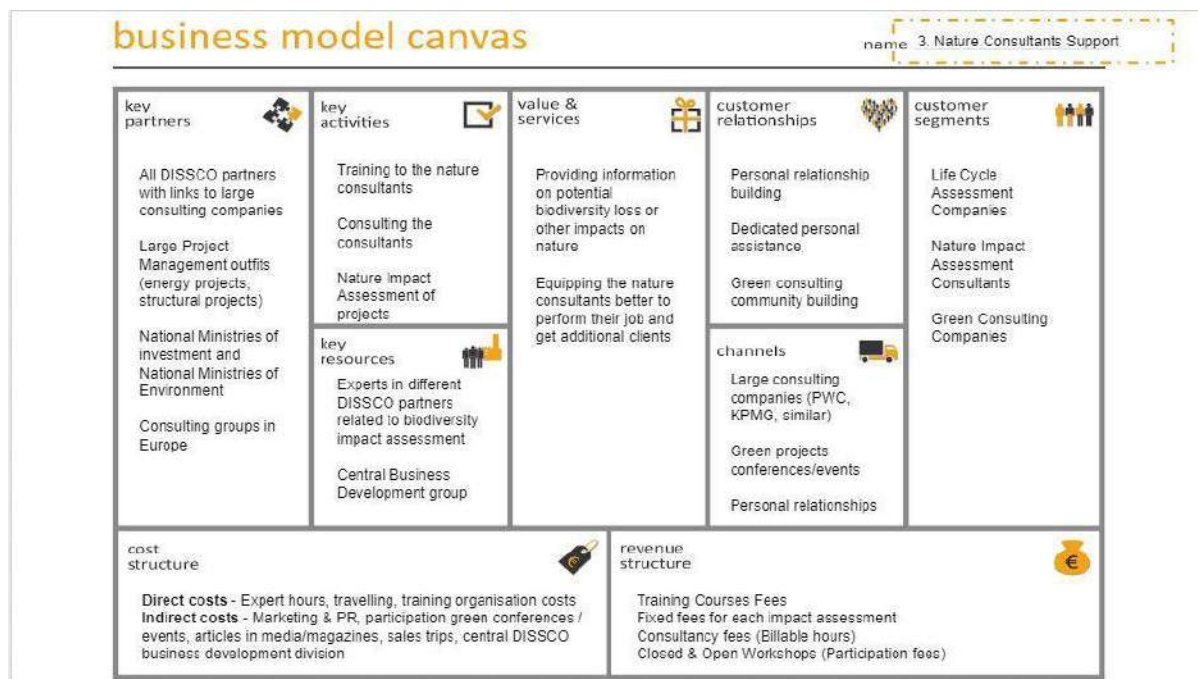
The added value of DiSSCO is the provision of digital models of different species, digitisation on demand for particular species not yet on record, access to data and models, and reporting with detailed explanations of the 'mechanics' of species. This could also include, for example, textural models of species (fur, scales etc).

The key activities here include 3D modeling, digitisation, virtual access and reporting.

In order to provide this service, DiSSCO can partner with chambers of commerce & industry from the digital media sector, creative/digital media schools and universities, participants in the [Creative Europe Programme](#), as well as associations like the [European Motion Picture Association](#).

As a business model, this is more in line with the core intention of DiSSCO than the previous business model, although it is perhaps less income-generating. As a service, it is already being provided in some institutions. However, the advantage of doing this at a DiSSCO level rather than at a national level is that it brings together all the species found in the different DiSSCO partner institutions.

Business model 3 - Nature consultancy and training



Business model 3 - Summary and Analysis

This business model centers around nature consultants and on the provision of training to these consultants.

Because of the current environmental situation, nowadays there are companies which focus on Life Cycle Assessment³ and Environmental/Nature Impact Assessment, where they sell their services to manufacturing firms in order to make them compliant with environmental impact regulations. However, these companies are generally not experts on flora and fauna, but only provide statistical answers to their clients.

In particular, measures and standards in biodiversity impact for businesses can be more complex than climate / carbon targets, and therefore require more consultancy support. There is some potential overlap between this business model and [Business Model 1](#), particularly for example in relation to debates about biodiversity indicators for the finance and investment industry⁴. An example of the kind of data and modeling that may underpin both business models / services is the Natural History Museum London's Biodiversity Trends Explorer.⁵

Therefore, DiSSCo's added value here is to provide information on potential biodiversity loss or other impacts on nature and to better equip the nature consultant to perform their job and get additional clients. This will be in the form of training, consulting and Nature Impact Assessment of projects.

The relationship built with these consultants is symbiotic, since they are being trained by DiSSCo to give a better service to their own clients.

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life-cycle_assessment

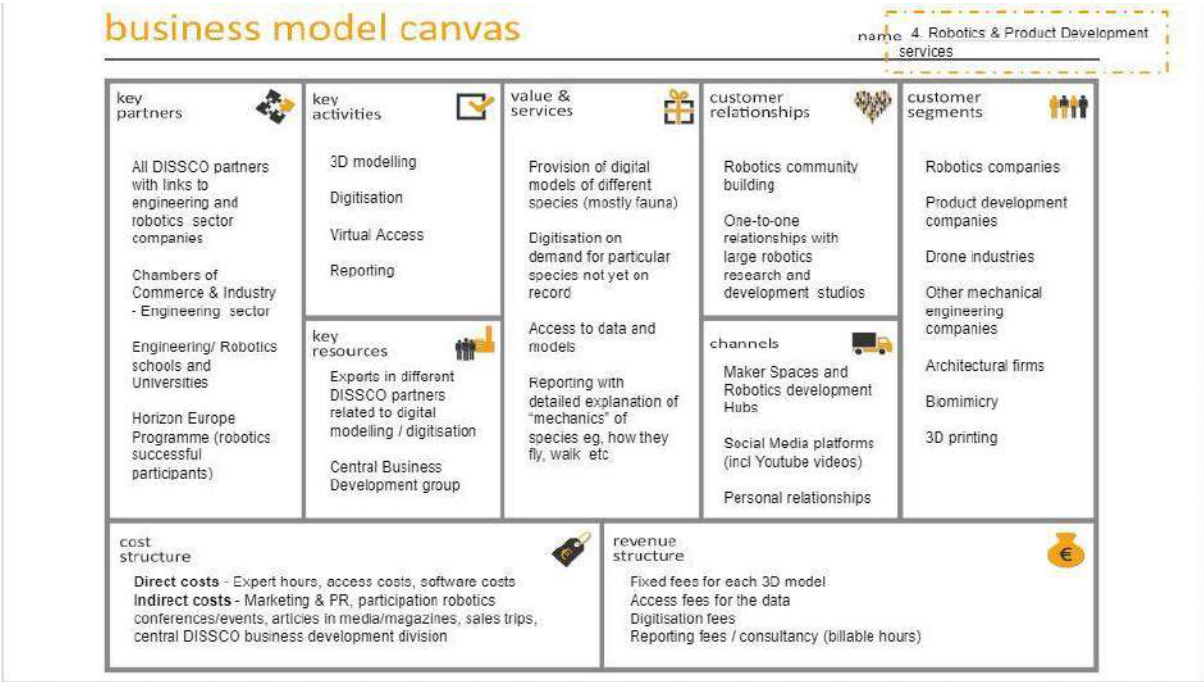
⁴ e.g., <https://www.unep-wcmc.org/en/news/the-finance-sector-should-urgently-set-biodiversity-targets>

⁵ <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/our-science/data/biodiversity-indicators.html>

Similar to other business models presented in this section, the service provided is less data-driven and more expert-driven. Moreover, the revenue structure is similar to the first one but with added training courses fees.

One element that needs to be kept in mind if opting for this business model is to not overlap with other existent services such as those of the ERIC [LifeWatch](#).

Business model 4 - Robotics & Product Development services



Business model 4 - Summary and Analysis

This business model is similar to No. 2 but is centered on robotics companies not gaming and is focused on providing help to build real things such as robots and drones.

The customer segment includes robotics companies, product development companies, drone industries, other mechanical engineering companies, and architectural firms.

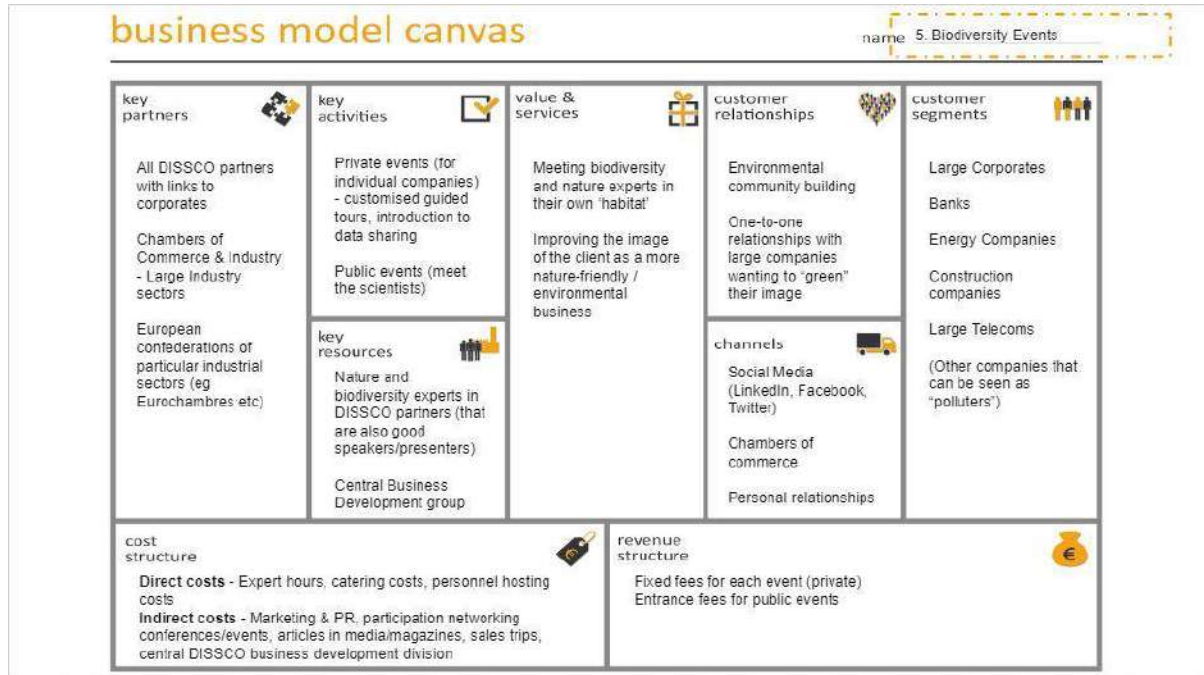
By learning how nature has evolved, we can give services to robotics or product development companies in order to help them to improve their products. For instance, at the moment, drones are not mimicking nature so much, so data on specimens could be of use.

The services offered would include provision of digital models of different species, digitisation on demand for particular species not yet on record, access to data and models, and reporting with detailed explanations of the 'mechanics' of species.

Key partners would be any DiSSCo partners who have links to engineering and robotics sector companies, Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Engineering/Robotics schools and Universities, but also successful participants in the Horizon Europe Programme who have focussed on Robotics.

As a business model, it has potential for further expansion, and the cost structure is similar to the second business model which focuses on gaming companies.

Business model 5 - Biodiversity Events



Business model 5 - Summary and Analysis

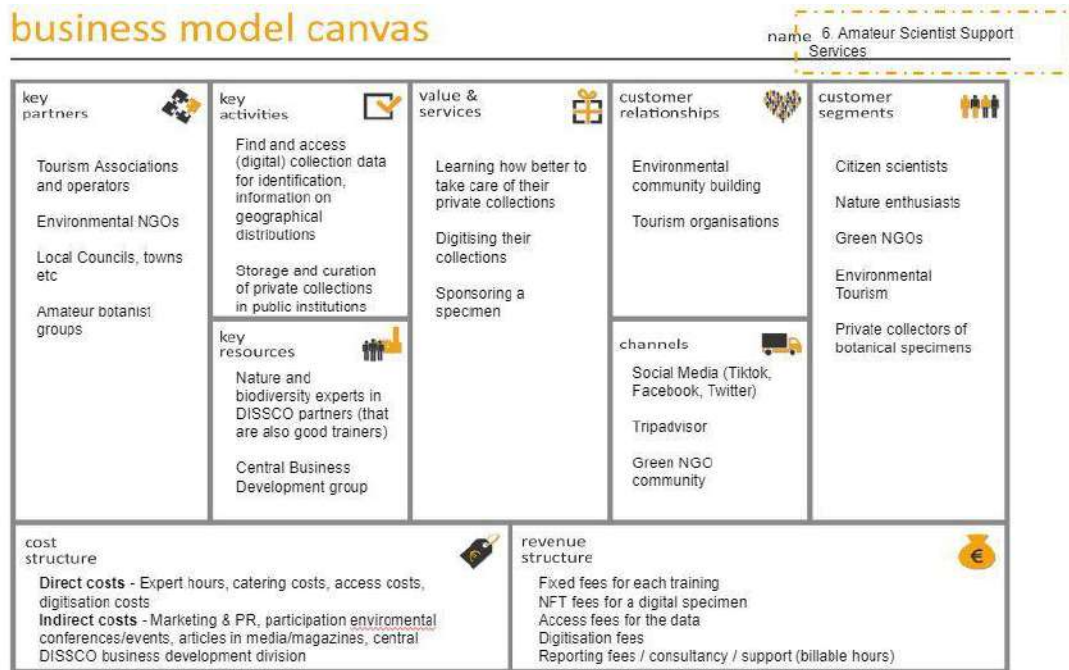
This business model is quite similar to the first business model but is more event-oriented. The customer segments are quite wide and include large corporates, banks, energy companies, construction companies, large telecoms and any other companies which could be seen as "polluters".

The service offered to customers is the opportunity to meet biodiversity and nature experts and discuss with them how to make successful events more nature-friendly, carbon neutral and to promote long-term sustainability and implement environmental business practices. Therefore, this entails hosting private and public events, customized guided tours of gardens and collections. The data of the institution will be showcased but also the people. It is thus important for these events to include nature and biodiversity experts in DiSSCo partners who are also good speakers and presenters.

This service is already being provided to a certain extent by individual institutions but the added value here lies in the possibility of offering the service at a European level. Moreover, it can be considered as a corporate social responsibility type of service since key European confederations of particular industrial sectors can be brought on as partners to provide an added level of support.

The reason for the low ranking of this business model, however, is the fact that the income only comes from fixed fees or entrance fees for events. Moreover, a lot of costs are involved for these events to be organized. Nevertheless, this service can be provided alongside other business models.

Business model 6 - Amateur Scientist Support Services



Business Model 6 - Summary and Analysis

This is a business-to-consumer service. The customers dealt with are citizen scientists, nature enthusiasts, green NGOs, people involved in environmental tourism, as well as private collectors of botanical specimens.

The major role of DiSSCo is to help these people to understand the data collections provided, but also to give guidance, especially to private collectors, on how to store and curate private collections.

Another possible service related to this business model is the idea of ‘adopting’ a specimen. Nature enthusiasts who are interested in adopting a specimen can contact DiSSCo and be put in contact with a particular institution who can provide this service, all of which would be against a fee. An alternative would be to allow for sponsoring with NFTs, where people could be digital owners of a particular specimen in a museum.

It would be helpful for DiSSCo to have a good relationship with tourism organizations and the environmental community, who are in contact with the potential customers mentioned above. The key partners here would be tourism associations and operators, environmental NGOs, local councils, towns, amateur botanist groups and other similar groups.

In general, the service above should still be provided to some extent by DiSSCo, but there is room for more value-added services, such as private tours and training on how to digitize collections, which

would be against a fee. The reason for the low ranking of this business model is that the income potential is not perceived to be sufficiently high.

04 Central Business Development Function

The main aim of a Central Business Development division within the future DiSSCo Central Hub is to allow for a dedicated team of individuals whose main purpose would be to make sure that enough income is generated by the ERIC to ensure its business viability. This income will then be added to the contributions made by member states. However, on its own it should operate like an independent business unit.

The advantages of this are different and include:

- **Economies of Scale:** It makes sense to have a core team rather than a distributed one in each and every member organization
- **European Level Opportunities:** There are some opportunities which appear only when there is a wide European level organization like DiSSCo ERIC and not at individual member state
- **Business Development services where there are none:** In some member organizations they do not have their own BD function and therefore having a centralized one will be an additional benefit to those members

Description of roles

Biz Development Manager - This will be the person who will be in charge of the Business Development function and the main "entrepreneur" whose main aim is to sell and develop central DiSSCo services. Contacts with potential clients will be a main task of this role, as well as sending in business proposals and calculating how to organize these services. At the same time the BD manager will also have to constantly keep in touch with the DiSSCo members, since they are the ones that will have to be asked to provide some of the services if they are successfully sold, and thus he/she will have to be kept informed of availabilities, special expertise found in some members, and related costings. Moreover the BD Manager should also ensure that a clear line of communication is kept with the European Commission and other large private funders (like foundations) for promoting DiSSCo as a reliable partner and service provider.

The ideal person for a BD Manager would be a business minded individual, with knowledge of natural history and deep personal networks with high net worth individuals and foundations.

Administration Assistant - This is the support to the BD Manager that is needed in order to both develop the business proposals, issue contracts, invoices, payment requests and keep everything recorded properly.

The ideal person would be an accounts graduate or else a seasoned administrator who has in the past worked in a multinational environment.

Marketing Officer - The role of the Marketing Officer is to ensure that DiSSCo makes the right types of headlines in the right types of locations be they online or offline. Both social media savviness and also the ability to organize public relations activities and actions would be required skills for this role. This is specific to marketing for business opportunities and services, but there may be potential to combine this with wider DiSSCo specialist communications roles.

Description of each sheet

Biz Dev - The annual costs for running the centralized DiSSCo business development function

This is split into staff costs (of the 3 staff members mentioned above), advertising budget (mostly for online social media, google ads and also some print adverts) and Events & PR (organization of annual events for DiSSCo business development)

Moreover there is also the addition of travel costs to allow the BD Manager to go and meet potential clients in person, and also some subcontracting in order to be able to engage some external expertise for Market research and door opening services.

Finally there is a standard overhead absorption rate of 25% calculated on staff and other costs.

Should there be sales, there is also a calculation of commissions, and if the idea of a centralized online platform for the business development announcements within the DiSSCo partners is taken up, there are also costs for that.

Procurement - This is an estimation of the annual costs for running the centralized DISSCO procurement function

Contracts - This is an estimation of the annual costs of a centralized contracting function within DiSSCo ERIC

Description of all the staff costs

Staff costs are taken to be an estimate from market values at an average EU member state level. This means that it is not assuming either the most expensive Member States (like Sweden and Denmark) and neither the lowest income levels (like in Romania and Bulgaria)

Sources of average rates are taken from Wikipedia (2022)⁶ and Eurostat (2022)⁷.

One needs to note that in this period of economic uncertainty, wage costs are fluctuating heavily and the numbers in this spreadsheet have been rounded in order to allow for some flexibility.

The assumptions, skills and levels have been described above. However, it is suggested that DiSSCo would employ for attitude / experience and train for skills, especially when it comes to the business development function, as here rather than the educational qualifications it is mostly the entrepreneurial skills which one would be after and that is not something that can be taught. In this respect some exploratory calls (Expression of Interest) should be issued in order to test the waters.

Link to Spreadsheet:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JOcgyMIqk85XTNQfHQH1gZAFpwKJIFg3xC0CVIzZg3I/edit?usp=sharing>

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_European_countries_by_average_wage

⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/14698153/3-15092022-BP-EN.pdf>

05 Legal Status of Commercial Activity in DiSSCo-ERIC

Article 2.5 of DiSSCo-ERIC's draft statutes is in perfect agreement with other ERICs' statutes. For example, compare article 2.5 of DiSSCo-ERIC with 2 articles below from the statutes of AnaEE-ERIC and BBMR-ERIC, respectively:

"4. AnaEE-ERIC shall pursue its principal task on a non-economic basis. AnaEE-ERIC may carry out limited economic activities provided that they are closely related to the principal tasks set out in Article 3(3) above and they do not jeopardize their achievement thereof."

& "3. Any income generated in the course of BBMRI-ERIC's activities that accrues to its budget shall be used for advancing the Work Programme according to the Assembly of Members' decision."

The % of income allowed to ERICs from commercial activities is **not strictly defined in any official document that we are aware of.**

Only the EC n° 723/2009 (25 June 2009) on the Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) mentions that ERICs *"may carry out **limited economic activities, provided that they are closely related to its principal task and that they do not jeopardize the achievement thereof**"* (Article 3.2), which has been correctly stated in current DiSSCo-ERIC's statutes.

The compilation of other ERIC's statutes and consultation of other ERICs (see Report on ERIC's financial legal statutes and commissioned activities) has shown that **not a single ERIC has defined a maximum % of income from commercial activity in its statutes.**

When asked the question *"what is the contribution (in %) of the commissioned services to the total incomes of {name}-ERIC?"* (Question 5 of the ERICs consultation), only 1 ERIC replies it has 1% contribution, but aims to reach 5%. Another one has not provided its % of income from commercial activity, but replied that it aims to 5%. All the others consulted ERICs and ELIXIR replied that this question was not applicable.

Recommendation: The logical conclusion is that the statutes of DiSSCo-ERIC should not mention a % of income that will originate from commercial activity, nor define a maximum % of income from commercial activity. If DiSSCo-ERIC must provide a value in its statutes (for example because the rules for statutes have changed), then it should be ≤5%, in line with other ERICs.

Note that any later decisions or changes concerning the charges and policy of commissioned services can be added up through the General Assembly to an updated version of the statutes at a later stage.

Assessment of financial and reputational risks

Several financial risks have been reported from the compilation of texts framing ERICs and from the consultation of ERICs (see Report on ERIC's financial legal statutes and commissioned activities). The identified risks have been summarized and listed here as key points. Note also that the report on 'ERIC Forum Policy Brief Funding Models for Access to ERIC Multinational/Transnational Services' (2020) constitutes a rich source of information that identifies additional financial risks and proposes a series of recommendations specifically related to the funding of ERICs.

Lack of visibility of ERICs

There is a financial risk arising from the lack of visibility of ERICs across Europe, particularly during their construction phase, that may result in a lack of knowledge of potential users about the ERIC.

For example one ERIC interviewed during the consultation would like to work more with industries and provide more services to private companies, but they struggle to find partners due to a problem of visibility of their ERIC.

In a similar way, the lack of knowledge of harmonized position from national authorities in Europe regarding the statutes of ERICs (e.g., Is an ERIC an international or national organization?) challenges ERICs applications to national funding bodies and limits opportunities for fundings in ERICs member countries. In addition, the rules of some national funding schemes (e.g.: That requires that research is done in the specific institution that gets the funding) constitutes a further financial risk to ERICs.

Recommendation: The diversification of services provided by the ERIC and increasing interactions between the ERIC and national and local stakeholders should increase the visibility of the ERIC at regional, national and European levels. More generally, the ERICs should communicate and make their activities as clear and public as possible.

Sustainability plans

Financial sustainability through securing long-term funding is an aim shared by all ERICs, since the lack of sustainability represents a risk for the long-term implementation and execution of an ERIC. The revenues of an ERIC from its sustainability plan aim to increase with time. A sustainable phase is often set-up during the “construction phase” of an ERIC.

Recommendation - make the ERIC sustainable by:

- Developing a sustainability plan during the ERIC’s construction phase.
- Diversifying the sources of the different incomes of the ERIC: The most funding diversification the best to ensure the sustainability of the ERIC.
- Implementing a user strategy (e.g.: access fee and commissioned services)
- Developing services and interactions with the private sector. We note however that one ERIC warns on the risk of intrusion in the ERIC’s governance in the case where an ERIC develops strong links with private partners.

Charge and margin of commissioned services

The charges and margins applied to commissioned services, as well as the users that will be charged for these services, must be carefully decided.

The consultation of ERICs highlights 3 ways to consider charges: 1) All services provided for free; 2) Some services charged; 3) Charge a % of the whole services to cover personal costs + material costs.

The consultation also highlights that, as an emerging facility starting operations, it is in the interest of ERICs to attract industrial users (within the limits of the ERIC Regulation) and therefore to keep the margin of commissioned services low.

Recommendations

Regarding the charges applied to services:

A suggestion from one ERIC contact is to analyze the prices of similar services provided by industrial competitors and define the costs of the ERIC's services based on the market analysis. It is not

recommended to charge the same price as industries if the service proposed by the ERIC is the same: in such a case the ERIC should go for a lower price. However, higher price than in the industry can be applied to the services if there is an additional value added up to the service compared to the industrial competitors (e.g. expertise or better capacity). A market analysis of competitors services could represent an advantage to create collaboration with private partners, e.g. by being a facility provider to private companies if the capacities of the ERIC's instruments is of a better level than the private competitor: Providing service to companies can help to make a place on the market while the company improves its facilities.

In order to be clear and transparent on the charges applied to commissioned services, a cost book for the services provided by the ERIC should be set-up, as recommended by Giorgio Rossi (Chair of the EC's High-Level Expert Group) at the 2021 ERIC forum dedicated to sustainability of ERICs.

Regarding the charges applied to the users of the services:

A possibility is to consider a pay grade for services, with different levels of prices; e.g. 1) Free for Member States users ; 2) Charges for users outside the Member States. The fees for the charged users would depend on the economic power of each country. A pay grade for services would engage countries to join the ERIC.

It is also recommended that observers should pay a fee (between 25-50% of the member's fee, typically 33%) to the ERIC, and thus benefit from a full access to the ERICs' services for free.

In a general way, several ERICs recommend to not charge academic researchers for accessing the services provided by the ERIC, because it would add up on the time and energy expanded by researchers who already struggle to find fundings; Providing services for free to researchers is also a great way to increase the visibility of the ERIC within the research and academic international communities.

Limitation from the funding bodies

Limitation – Horizon Europe: A limitation can arise from the national rules of the Member's states, since some rules are in contradiction with ERICs mechanisms (e.g.: The Co-fund program may require that research is done in the specific institution that gets the funding).

Limitation – European Research Council: A weakness of fundings from the ERC for ERICs concerns distributed ERICs that have faced administrative challenges when there is a simultaneous implication in a project of both an ERICs headquarter (coordination/core team/central hub) and one or more of its national nodes. This adds significant hurdles to the execution of the projects and also has an impact on ERICs visibility as a single entity.

Limitation – National & Regional fundings: The lack of knowledge of ERICs statutes (whether they are international or national organization) by EU member states is a weakness that challenges ERICs applications to national and regional funding bodies, for which they commonly have to prove their eligibility. A second limitation to the access of ERICs to national and regional funding is the fact that these fundings are designed to support the development of cross-border projects, implying that research funded by a country could be hosted in a different country, which can represent a barrier to successfully secure national fundings. Therefore there is a need for a harmonized position of EU member states regarding the statutes of ERICs.

Economic activities jeopardizing the ERIC

The economic activities of an ERIC must remain secondary and not prevail over the execution of its main task.

Recommendation: If an economic activity becomes successful enough to be no longer considered as secondary, an ERIC may consider creating a spin-off company for example.

Transparency

Commissioned services must be charged with the most possible accuracy and transparency regarding how much it costs to the ERIC to provide the services, but also regarding the price and commission that the ERIC applies to the provided services.

Recommendations: The charge for a service must include all real costs: goods, electricity, water, time of the staff... Recipients should receive an invoice, even if they are not charged for the services: it is good both for transparency and for ERICs financial annual reports.

06 Conclusion and recommendations

The journey undertaken during this last year with DiSSCo partners has uncovered some interesting potential business opportunities that have been described above. It has also shone a light on the fact that several of the DiSSCo partners are really interested in making sure that there is a European level of opportunities that they can contribute to and tap into. In general, every level we spoke to (whether in surveys, workshops, meetings) was positive on wanting to learn more on how to build a European level entity that, although new, would be bringing value to them all.

Our conclusion is therefore that this is a pathway that should be continued and should be explored more. Of course at the moment everything is hypothetical, and we are doing scenario building and ecosystem mapping of what can be, and not what is at the moment. However with a small investment of costs to have a more centralized business development function within DiSSCo ERIC, these hypotheses can start becoming realities.

Our recommendations are therefore the following:

1. Get a clear go ahead and sign off from the strategy group that going after business opportunities for DiSSCo ERIC as a separate source of income, beyond member states contributions is of importance.
2. Find those DiSSCo partners that are most motivated in making this happen and create a business development subgroup that will keep meeting at least once a month to discuss different opportunities that come up.
3. Continue building the ecosystem map by putting in real names of contacts that will be useful either as clients or as champions of the business side of DiSSCo. This will eventually become a sort of CRM / Leads list.
4. Consider putting aside some funds to start building the centralized DiSSCo business development function. This can be part of a future DiSSCo project for now, but ideally has a bit more autonomy than just being people assigned to a work package. Someone has to “own” this and make it his or her baby ensuring that this grows more. Therefore as soon as the central DiSSCo ERIC is set up, then this centralized business function should also be set up.
5. Expand those six business models above to six small business plans and see which one would give the quickest return with the least amount of effort.
6. Pivot when needed... Becoming agile is important in the business world and sometimes the first thing that one tries is not the best, but one has to learn, change and keep going.

We hope to continue hearing about new and exciting steps that DiSSCo is taking towards its financial sustainability and we remain at your disposal for future support and engagement where needed.

Supplementary Files

Supplementary File 1

Across Limits (2022) DiSSCo Prepare WP4 - Task 4.2: Ecosystem Mapping [D4.2 DiSSCo Ecosystem Map.pptx.pdf](#)

Supplementary File 2

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Report on ERICs financial activities and commissioned services

DiSSCo Prepare WP 4 – Deliverable 4.2

Work package Leader: Michel Guiraud
(MNHM)

Author: Gaël Lymer¹

¹ Royal Belgian institute of Natural Sciences



Deliverable references

Deliverable	4.2
Work Package	4
Lead Partner	MNHN, RBINS
Status	??
Deliverable type	Report
Dissemination level	??
Due date	??
Submission date	

Abstract

This report presents a study of the legal frames of the European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC), to support the potential development of commissioned services within the future DiSSCo-ERIC (Distributed System of Scientific Collections). The results of the analysis of legal statutes and annual activity reports of eleven established ERICs and of the intergovernmental organization ELIXIR, as well as a consultation on their economic activities, help to define ERICs legal ability to develop commissioned services, and how these commissioned services are managed between the ERICs and their users.

The study highlights that ERICs are encouraged to diversify both their services and their sources of incomes to support their sustainable development. It shows that there is not one single financial model for all ERICs and that legal statutes and financial models must be adapted to the activity of the ERIC.

Key words

DiSSCo-Services, commercial activity, commissioned services, ERIC statutes, financial readiness, annual activity reports, ERIC's income diversification



H2020-INFRADEV-2019-2
Grant Agreement No 871043

Grant Agreement number: 871043 — DiSSCo Prepare — H2020-INFRADEV-2018-2020 / H2020-INFRADEV-2019-2

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INTRODUCTION

In order to contribute to the setup of the future DiSSCo-ERIC (Distributed System of Scientific Collections), this document provides a compilation and a study of the legal texts and the statutes currently framing the European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC), as defined in June 2009 by the European Strategic Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI)¹.

The goal of this study is to specifically support the potential development of commissioned services within DiSSCo-ERIC. The aim of this report is to define the financial statutes of existing ERICs regarding their legal ability to develop commissioned services, to understand whether related charges can be applied to services provided by ERICs and if yes, in which circumstances and to which users.

There are currently twenty-two active ERICs, with a list and information on each ERIC provided on the ERICs landscape website of the European Commission². This report is based on information compiled from eleven of these ERICs, plus data from the intergovernmental organisation ELIXIR, whose legal architecture appears to be close to those of ERICs.

The first section of this report presents a compilation of documents framing the financial statutes of ERICs, namely:

- The Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructures Consortium (ERIC)
- The ERIC Practical guidelines: Legal framework for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium
- The outcomes from ERIC Forum: Consultancy on Sustainability and economic activities of ERICs, November 2021

The second section of this report consists in a compilation of the financial, and some governance, aspects of eight existing ERICs statutes, plus ELIXIR, as they are published on the websites of these bodies. For each organisation is also included a brief objective, information on the financial aspects of their legal statutes and, when available, details from their annual financial budgets and other information published in their annual activity reports, that may be relevant for the future DiSSCo-ERIC.

The compilation statutes includes the following ERICs: AnaEE-ERIC, EPOS-ERIC, BBMRI-ERIC, EMBRC-ERIC, CLARIN-ERIC, INSTRUCT-ERIC, CERIC-ERIC, SHARE-ERIC

The third section of this report presents a summary and analysis of the documents from the first section and of the ERIC's data from the second section.

The fourth section presents the results of a consultation that has been led by the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS, Brussels) in October and November 2022. The consultation consists of interviews of a selection of eight ERICs, plus ELIXIR, regarding their commissioned services and tariffications to their members and users. Both the answers to the questions and a summary of the results are presented.

Interviewed ERICs for the consultation are as follow: BBMRI-ERIC, CERIC-ERIC, CLARIN-ERIC, DARIAH-ERIC, ELI-ERIC, EMBRC-ERIC, EPOS-ERIC, LIFEWATCH-ERIC

¹ [EC n° 723/2009 \(25 June 2009\)](#) : EC n° 723/2009 (25 June 2009) on the Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC); ² [ERIC Landscape \(europa.eu\)](#)

01 ERICs' LEGAL FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

1. Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructures Consortium (ERIC)

The information reported in this section are directly extracted from the following sources:

- The webpage of the European Commission on the European Research Infrastructure Consortium: [ERIC \(europa.eu\)](http://ERIC.europa.eu)
- EC n° 723/2009 (25 June 2009) on the Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC): [EC n° 723/2009 \(25 June 2009\)](#)
- EU n° 1261/2013 (2 December 2013) amending the Regulation EC 723-2009: [EU n° 1261/2013 \(2 December 2013\)](#)

“Regulations:

(8) An ERIC set up under this Regulation should have as its principal task the establishment and operation of a research infrastructure **on a non-economic basis** and should devote most of its resources to this principal task. In order to promote innovation and knowledge and technology transfer, **the ERIC should be allowed to carry out some limited economic activities if they are closely related to its principal task and they do not jeopardise its achievement.**

(19) An ERIC could qualify for funding in accordance with Title VI of the Financial Regulation. **Funding under the Cohesion Policy could also be possible**, in conformity with the relevant Community legislation.

Article 3.2. An ERIC shall pursue its **principal task on a non-economic basis**. However, **it may carry out limited economic activities, provided that they are closely related to its principal task and that they do not jeopardise the achievement thereof.**

Article 3.3. **An ERIC shall record the costs and revenues of its economic activities separately and shall charge market prices for them, or, if these cannot be ascertained, full costs plus a reasonable margin.**

Article 13 Budgetary principles, accounts and audit

13.1. All items of revenue and expenditure of an ERIC shall be included in estimates to be drawn up for each financial year and shall be shown in the budget. **The revenue and expenditure shown in the budget shall be in balance.**

13.4. The accounts of an ERIC shall be accompanied by a report on budgetary and financial management of the financial year.

Article 15 Applicable law and jurisdiction : 15.1. The setting-up and internal functioning of an ERIC shall be governed: (a) by Community law, in particular this Regulation, and the decisions referred to in Articles 6(1)(a) and 11(1); (b) by the law of the State where the ERIC has its statutory seat in the case of matters not, or only partly, regulated by acts referred to in point (a);”

2. ERIC Practical guidelines - Legal framework for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium

The information reported in this section are directly extracted from the following source:

[- ERIC practical guidelines - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](#)

“3.2. Implementation

Task and activities

According to the ERIC regulation, an ERIC must carry out its principal task on a **non-economic basis**. However, it may **carry out limited economic activities**, provided they are closely related to its principal task and do not jeopardise its achievement.

1. Economic and non-economic activities

In interpreting the notion of ‘non-economic’, the Commission relies on the definition of ‘economic activities’ as developed on the basis of the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union in competition matters. **An economic activity consists of offering goods and/or services on a given market.** The fact that an activity is carried out by a non-profit operator is not enough to avoid classification as an economic activity. **Conversely, the fact that a fee might be charged does not in itself render the activity ‘economic’ if the access and related services do not correspond to what the market can provide.** Whether a market exists for a certain service depends on the organisation of the activity by the Member State concerned and can therefore differ from one Member State to another. It may also change over time due to policy decisions on the way in which the activity is organised or as a result of market developments.

2. Limited economic activities

The economic activities of an ERIC must remain secondary and not prevail over the execution of its main task. Quantifiable elements may be used to assess the importance of each activity, such as the respective costs and income, use of human resources or the share of access to the facility for economic and non-economic purposes. **If an economic activity becomes successful enough to be no longer considered as secondary, an ERIC may consider creating a spin-off company for example.**

3. Recording of the costs and revenues of economic activities

According to the ERIC regulation, an ERIC must record the costs and revenues of its economic activities separately **and charge market prices for them**. If such prices cannot be ascertained, it must charge full costs **plus a reasonable margin**. This margin may be the margin established by reference to margin commonly applied by undertakings for the same activity.

Budgetary principles

The budget is the responsibility of the members of an ERIC. The regulation lays down the essential principles (14):

- all items of revenue and expenditure must be included in estimates to be drawn up for each financial year and must be shown in the budget;
- revenue and expenditure shown in the budget **must be in balance;**”

3. Outcomes from ERIC Forum: Consultancy on Sustainability and economic activities of ERICs - November 2021

1. Procurement rules, VAT exemption practices and economic activities

The information reported in this section are directly extracted from the following sources:

- Webinar on Procurement Rules, VAT Exemption Practices and Economic Activities of ERICs: [Watch now ► Webinar on Procurement Rules, VAT Exemption Practices and Economic Activities - \(eric-forum.eu\)](#)
- Recorded videos of the webinar available on Youtube: [ERIC Forum webinar on Procurement Rules, VAT Exemption Practices and Economic Activities - YouTube](#)
- Report of the webinar: [ERIC-Forum-D3.2-Procurement-rules-VAT-exempt-economic-activities.pdf](#)

By law and as stated in their legal framework, ERICs can benefit from large VAT and Excise exemptions on a variety of purchases. The exemptions are directly applied by the member states, in specific conditions that are fully described in the webinar; The interested readers are thus invited to visit the aforementioned sources for more details.

The following information are directly extracted from the report of the webinar:

“3. Types of activities performed by ERICs

Some questions of the surveys carried out *{Note: The webinar included surveys and interviews of existing ERICs}* were focused on collecting information referred to the **commercial activities** implemented by ERICs. **Only in 17% of the cases, these activities are regularly carried out.**

The low percentage could be justified by the following factors:

- the complexity in defining integrated commercial services to offer on the market;
- the recent implementation of the ERIC regulation, as a tool to develop strategic long term collaboration at European level.
- the potential reluctance of some delegated entities in performing business joint based.

The implementation of the (limited) **economic activities is an additional key to strengthen the cooperation between Member States in programming and implementing applied and commercial research related activities in a complementary manner**, avoiding duplication of efforts as well as rationalising the possible commercial use of these research infrastructures.

In order to fulfil the obligations arising from the fiscal laws, as well as to respect the provisions stated in the ERIC Regulation, in all these cases the adoption of separate accounting has been implemented.

In all probability, the high percentage of ERICs not performing commercial activities depends on the novelty of these organisations.

1.1 Support provided by the Members / Observers

1.1.1 Establishment of the ERIC

With reference to the financial model of the ERICs involved in the surveys, the establishment of the individual Statutory Seats have been supported by the Members through financial and in-kind contributions in 67% of the cases.

There is a distinction between the contributions provided by the members and the ones provided by the observers. In the first case, the amount transferred by the observers corresponds to a percentage of the resources transferred in relation to the (full) membership. This is the consequence of the fact

that observers cannot vote in the General Assembly as well as that they are subject to specific conditions listed in the individual Statutes.

2.3.2 Operation of the ERICs

In 33% of the cases, the Entities hosting the nodes are specifically funded by the Members in order to support the operation of the ERICs. In the remaining 67% of the cases, the ERICs operations are granted by the ordinary funds of the appointed entities.”

2. Sustainability of Research Infrastructures


This section includes a selection of slides extracted from the talks of the Webinar on Procurement Rules, VAT Exemption Practices and Economic Activities of ERICs. The workshop page that includes the uploaded talks from which these slides are extracted can be visited at this weblink: [Overview ► Planning for Sustainability of Research Infrastructures - \(eric-forum.eu\)](#)

- Slide selected from talk by **Jan Hrusak, Chair, ESFRI** ; Key message: Early clear plan for RI implementation is key for sustainability.

ESFRI WHITE PAPER: Long-term sustainability of RIs

Effective RI implementation and sustainability

- **Comprehensive plan right at the beginning of new ERA for RI**
 - financing of different phases of the RI lifecycle
 - Sustainable & predictable funding are key elements
 - adequate and sustainable funding models to address diversity of needs
 - human resources remain a challenge
 - data management as an interoperability tool
 - effective government & management
- ESFRI continues to support initiatives facilitating the combination and synergies of national and European funds (H2020/H Europe, structural funds, and other European) funding for RIs



- Slide selected from talk by **Dominik Sobczak, Head of Unit, European Commission** ; Key message: Produce a diverse and well-documented catalogue of services to increase the visibility of the RI.

Key elements of the Action Plan - Implementation

 **Establishing adequate framework conditions for effective governance and sustainable long-term funding of RI:**

- Synchronising national roadmaps
- ✓ **Significant effort at national level – ERA Progress reports**
Supporting newly established ESFRI and ERICs
- ✓ **Dedicated EU funding 2016 – 2020 (EUR 104 million)**
Increasing visibility of the services offered by pan-European RI
- ✓ **Catalogue of RI services developed**
Establishing guidelines on decommissioning
- ✓ **ESFRI Roadmap methodology – planning and cost calculation**
Facilitating RI access to EU funds, encouraging new sources of funding including private funding
- ✓ **Promoting the use of ESIF, EIB loans, RRF programmes**



- Slide selected from talk by **Giorgio Rossi, Chair of the EC's High-Level Expert Group to Assess the Progress of ESFRI and Other World Class Research Infrastructures Towards Implementation and Long-Term Sustainability Commission** ; Key message: The design of a cost book during the preparation phase is essential for long-term sustainability of RIs.

The operational costs burden

One common bottleneck for RIs, is to ensure adequate funding of their operational costs. These costs are often of the order of 10% of the initial construction investment per annum, but are too often treated as a separate issue to the construction budget.

The delivery of science is the very reason why the RI was designed and built, **but this productive phase turns out to be a bigger financial problem than the construction.**

On the RI side, a **culture of 'costing' must be fostered**. Not having a completed and validated cost-book is a pitfall of most RIs, and the risks connected with unknown cost influence decisions.

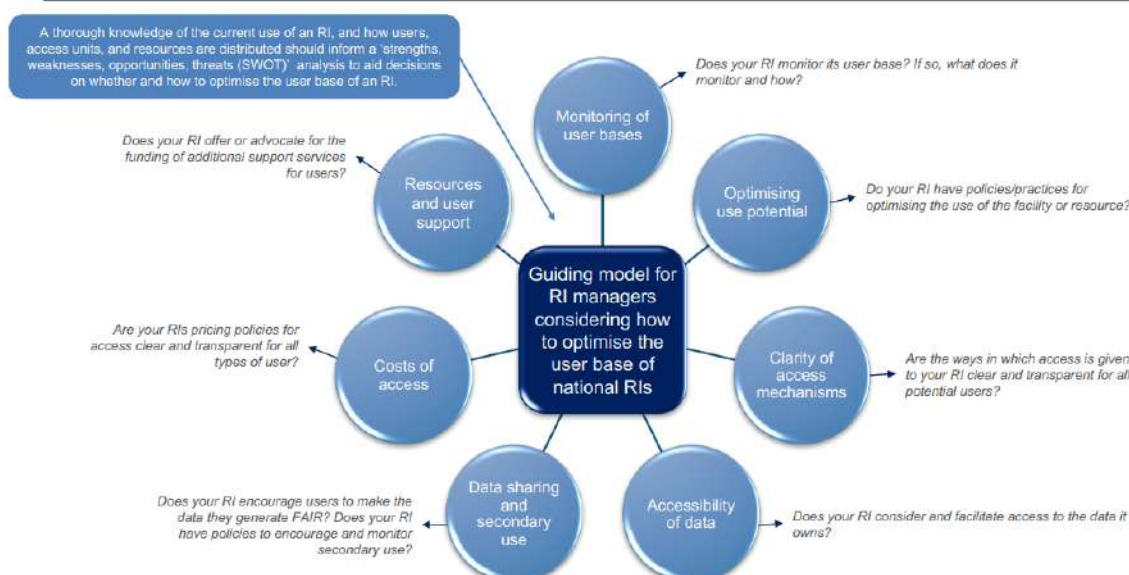
RIs that experienced large increases of cost, not foreseen or covered by contingency, put a stress on the whole RI system.

One alternative planning instrument could be to **reverse the budget engineering and to evaluate what operational costs are considered sustainable for the 20-50 years** during which the successful operation will generate return, then trace this back to determine the initial maximum investment size.

Much of the **operational cost burden has to do with insufficient planning**, design of the RI, and/or governance and management during the initial stages. Specific **checkpoints** must be established in a business plan that covers the entire lifecycle of the RI.

- Slide selected from talk by **Frederic Sgard, Science and Technology Policy Division, OECD** ; Key message: Policy of access should be clear to every user and the services should be diverse to attract as many users as possible.

Sustainability is highly dependant on the user base



02 ERICs OFFICIAL STATUTES

This section presents a compilation of key elements from eight selected ERICs statutes and their annual activity reports. The compiled information is focussed on the financial aspect and commissioned activities of the concerned ERICs. Each ERIC is presented in a sub-section that also includes a brief objective of the ERIC, the links to the sources used and a summary of relevant information. The same information is also presented for the intergovernmental organisation ELIXIR.

1. AnaEE-ERIC

1. Homepage

AnaEE: Analysis and Experimentation on Ecosystems, February 2022

[ANAE - Analysis and experimentation on ecosystems - Université Grenoble Alpes - Accueil](#)

Objective: Integrated access to state-of-the-art experimental and analytical platforms for ecosystem research throughout Europe. AnaEE-ERIC offers capacities to develop multidisciplinary approaches at the frontiers of life sciences, agronomy and environmental sciences, combining experimentation, analysis and modelling services to answer pressing scientific and societal issues'. AnaEE-ERIC will 'advance our understanding of the environmental impacts of ongoing global change and foster adaptation and mitigation strategies for safeguarding ecosystem services and their economic and societal benefits.'

2. Statutes

Weblink to statutes: [EUR-Lex - 32022Y0224\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

Weblink to annual report: Not yet published

Financial and Governance aspects of AnaEE-ERIC's statutes:

CHAPTER 1 - ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Article 3 - Task and activities

1. The principal task of AnaEE-ERIC shall be to establish and operate a distributed Research Infrastructure devoted to the Analysis of and Experimentation on Ecosystems. Its goal is to provide the tools, services and knowledge necessary to tackle the complex global environmental and climate challenges facing human societies.
2. AnaEE-ERIC shall operate with the Central Hub (CH), the Interface and Synthesis Centre (ISC), the Technology Centre (TC), and the Data Modelling Centre (DMC).
3. For the purposes of paragraph 1, AnaEE-ERIC shall:
 - a. coordinate access to the experimental, analytical and modelling National Platforms and organise the collaboration with European facilities;
 - b. facilitate European research programmes and projects;
 - c. develop technology, harmonising methods, building industrial partnerships and facilitate knowledge transfer;
 - d. contribute to the exchange of knowledge and/or competencies within the European Research Area (ERA) and increasing the use of intellectual potential throughout Europe;
 - e. develop data access, sharing and modelling;

f. **organise training;**

g. implement a communication strategy;

h. any other related action necessary to achieve its aims.

4. AnaEE-ERIC shall pursue its **principal task on a non-economic basis**. AnaEE-ERIC may carry out **limited economic activities provided that they are closely related to the principal tasks set out in Article 3(3) above and they do not jeopardise their achievement thereof**.

Chapter 6 - Finance

Article 30 - Resources

The resources of AnaEE-ERIC shall be comprised of:

1. Member and Observer fees according to Articles 17 and 31.
2. The Host Premium contribution, provided by the Members hosting either a Service Centre or the Central Hub, as set out in Annex III.
3. Any other contributions, such as grants or **income deriving from services** or intellectual property rights owned by AnaEE-ERIC, **within limits and under terms approved by the Assembly of Members**.

Article 31 - Principles for contributions of Members and Observers

1. The Members and Observers shall make annual contributions to AnaEE-ERIC.
2. The level of contribution of the Members shall be established for a budgetary cycle and approved by the Assembly of Members, according to the procedures set out in Article 18 and Annex III.
3. **In-kind contributions shall be considered only when in the form of effective and quantifiable contribution to AnaEE-ERIC**, including seconded personnel to AnaEE-ERIC, and agreed by the Assembly of Members. The Assembly of Members shall agree on an accounting system, rules for the acceptance of in-kind contributions and the assessment of their value.
4. Financial contributions shall be made in Euro.
5. **The value of any in-kind contributions shall be taken into account when calculating the financial contributions** provided during the same period of time, in order to calculate (i) the total amount of contributions provided during the year in question and (ii) the specific proportions contributed by each Member to the total amount of contributions.

Article 32 - Budget, budgetary principles, accounts and audit

1. All items of revenue and expenditure of AnaEE-ERIC shall be included in estimates to be drawn up for each financial year and shall be shown in the budget.
2. **Revenues and expenditures of AnaEE-ERIC shall be in balance.**
3. The Assembly of Members shall ensure that AnaEE-ERIC resources are used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management.
4. The budget shall be established and implemented and the accounts presented in compliance with the principle of transparency.
5. The accounts of AnaEE-ERIC shall be audited annually and accompanied by a report on the budgetary and financial management of the preceding financial year. The Assembly of Members shall approve the appointment and duration of an external auditor and shall approve the audited accounts and report on budgetary and financial management for the preceding financial year within six months of the end of the financial year.

6. AnaEE-ERIC shall be subject to the requirements of the applicable law as regards preparation, filing, auditing and publication of accounts.

Article 33 - Taxes

1. **VAT exemptions** based on Articles 143(1)(g) and 151(1)(b) of Council Directive 2006/112/EC and in accordance with Articles 50 and 51 of Council Implementing Regulation (EU) No 282/2011 **shall be applied to purchases of goods and services by AnaEE-ERIC and by a AnaEE-ERIC Member in the meaning of chapters 2 and 3 of the Statutes** which are for the official and exclusive use by AnaEE-ERIC, provided that such purchase is made solely for the non-economic activities of AnaEE-ERIC in line with its activities. VAT exemptions shall be limited to purchases exceeding the value of EUR 300.

2. Excise duty exemptions based on Article 12 of Council Directive 2020/262 shall be limited to purchases by the AnaEE-ERIC which are for the official and exclusive use by AnaEE-ERIC, provided that such a purchase is made solely for the non-economic activities of AnaEE-ERIC in line with its activities and that the purchase exceeds the value of EUR 300.

3. Purchases by staff members are not covered by the exemptions.

CHAPTER 3 - RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE MEMBERS AND OBSERVERS

Article 15 - Members

1. Rights of Members shall include:

- a) attending and voting at the Assembly of Members;
- b) participating in the development of strategies and policies of AnaEE-ERIC;
- c) using AnaEE-ERIC's brand;
- d) participating in project proposals where AnaEE-ERIC acts as the submitting consortium;
- e) **accessing the services and activities coordinated by AnaEE-ERIC for its research community.**

2. Each Member shall:

- a) pay the annual financial contribution as specified in respective annual financial budgets approved by the Assembly of Members;
- b) empower its representative(s) with full authority to vote on all issues raised during the Assembly of Members meetings and published in the agenda;
- c) provide access according to the AnaEE-ERIC access policy to National Platform activities complying with AnaEE-ERIC criteria;
- d) promote the adoption and maintenance of the quality standards and standard operation procedures of AnaEE-ERIC in their contributing national research platforms;
- e) **promote the use of AnaEE-ERIC resources and services among researchers.**

Article 16 - Observers

1. Rights of Observers shall include:

- a) attending the Assembly of Members without a vote;
- b) **participating in AnaEE-ERIC's events, such as workshops, conferences, training courses, and in any other activities identified by the Assembly of Members;**
- c) **accessing support from AnaEE-ERIC in developing relevant systems, processes and services.**

2. Each Observer shall:

- a) appoint a representing entity in accordance with Article 18 ;
- b) provide the annual contribution determined in relation to the overall annual financial contributions of the Members without having any impact on the latter. The amount of this contribution shall be decided by the Assembly of Members;
- c) contribute to **AnaEE-ERIC's tasks and activities as set out in Article 3;**
- d) enter into an Observer agreement with AnaEE-ERIC in order to establish the terms and conditions under which the obligations are to be fulfilled and the Observer's rights can be exercised.

3. *Summary for AnaEE-ERIC*

AnaEE-ERIC **can provide services and charge for them**; Applying a fee/charge for service does not mean that the ERIC has a commercial activity or an economic-basis.

Services shall be **limited by the terms agreed by the assembly of members**; Services can be charged, but **economic activities shall be limited and closely related to the principal tasks of the ERIC** as defined in its statutes - the ERIC shall pursue its principal task on a **non-economic basis - budget must eventually be balanced.**

Services are accessible to the ERIC's research community: members that pay a fee can "accessing the services and activities coordinated by AnaEE-ERIC", observers can "participate in AnaEE-ERIC's events" – members can access directly, but observers might have to pay a fee to access the services.

Limited economic activities should be closely related to the principal tasks of the ERIC and do not jeopardise their achievement thereof.

2. EPOS-ERIC

1. *Homepage*

EPOS: European Plate Observing System, October 2018

[the European Plate Observing System \(epos-eu.org\)](http://epos-eu.org)

Objective: The European Commission granted on 30 October 2018 the legal statutes of European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) to the European Plate Observing System (EPOS), a research infrastructure that will provide a better understanding of the physical processes controlling earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, tectonic movements and other such geo-hazards with potentially grave impact on the environment and the welfare of citizens.

2. *Activity report (2020) and statutes*

Weblink to statutes: [EUR-Lex - 32018Y1123\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2018/1123/oj)

Weblink to annual reports: [Documents | EPOS \(epos-eu.org\)](https://epos-eu.org/documents)

Financial and Services aspects of EPOS-ERIC extracted from their 2020 annual activity report:

'The year 2020 has been the second year of operation of EPOS ERIC. The total revenues in the 2020 EPOS ERIC Budget are €2,940,105 and are composed of the membership fees contribution (€1,328,000), the cash contribution from the Italian Host Premium (€643,806), the EPOS SP annual budget (€143,497), the valorisation of the in-kind contributions (€630,047) and the use of the cash carry over from the previous year (€194,755); moreover, the 2020 cash carry over of the financial

statements is €1,574,532. The revenue from the membership fees differs from the one envisioned in the 2020 Provisional Budget (€1,400,000) because of the reduced Switzerland contribution acknowledged by the EPOS ERIC GA.

The EPOS SP (EPOS Sustainability Phase) project is dedicated to support the long-term sustainability of the EPOS RI. EPOS ERIC is coordinator of the project. EPOS SP **includes implementation of user strategy (access fee and commissioned services), training, the interaction with the private sector and the added value for society.**



Profit and Loss Account

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT					
		2021		2020	
Revenues			2.725.633		1.365.642
	National and international grants and contributions		1.801.416		735.526
	▪ monetary contribution of EPOS ERIC Members	1.464.000		1.326.000	
	▪ host premium cash contribution	648.934		643.806	
	▪ contribution project externally funded	163.973		143.497	
	▪ use of carry over of previous years	-		194.755	
	▪ carry over of the year (-)	(495.491)		(1.574.532)	
	Contributions in-kind		924.215		630.047
	▪ contributions in kind by hosting country	317.922		332.648	
	▪ contributions in kind by members	606.293		297.399	
	Other revenues		2		69

Screenshot of EPOS 2021 financial report showing (yellow) the contribution of projects externally funded, that includes commissioned services

Financial and Governance aspects of EPOS-ERIC's statutes:

CHAPTER 3 RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE MEMBERS AND OBSERVERS

Article 7 Members

1. Rights of members shall include:

- (a) the right to participate in and vote at the General Assembly;
- (b) the right for its research community to participate in EPOS ERIC events, such as workshops, conferences, training courses;
- (c) the right for its research community to have access to support from EPOS ERIC for developing relevant systems, processes and services;**
- (d) the right to appoint one or more representing entities in accordance with Article 4 of the Statutes.

2. Each member shall:

- (a) provide the **annual contribution in accordance with Article 9 of the Statutes;**

(b) promote the adoption of relevant standards, within its relevant scientific communities; (c) provide the necessary technical infrastructure to make access possible;

(d) **promote uptake of services among researchers in the member**, and gather user feedback and requirements;

(e) support centres in the member by facilitating integration into national and other relevant infrastructures.

Article 8 Observers

1. Rights of observers shall include: (a) the right to attend the General Assembly without a vote;

(b) the right for its research community to participate in EPOS ERIC events, such as workshops, conferences, training courses;

(c) the right for its research community to have access to support from EPOS ERIC in developing relevant systems, processes and services;

(d) the right to appoint one representing entity in accordance with Article 4 of the Statutes.

2. Each observer shall:

(a) promote the adoption of relevant standards, within its relevant scientific communities;

(b) provide the necessary technical infrastructure to make access possible;

Article 9 Contributions

1. The annual contributions to EPOS ERIC and the **methods for their calculation are specified in Annex II of the Statutes**. Any changes affecting the members' or permanent observers' contributions shall be adopted by the General Assembly according to Article 10(9)(d) of the Statutes.

2. Members who have joined EPOS ERIC reserving the right to withdraw before the end of the first five years of the establishment of EPOS ERIC shall pay a higher annual contribution as set out in Annex II of the Statutes

CHAPTER 6 - FINANCE, LIABILITY

Article 15 – Resources

The resources of EPOS ERIC shall consist of the following:

(a) **financial contributions of members and permanent observers according to Annex II of the Statutes**, hereafter termed membership fees;

(b) host contributions of members and permanent observers;

(c) in-kind contributions according to the EPOS ERIC Implementing Rules;

(d) additional voluntary contributions according to the EPOS ERIC Implementing Rules;

(e) grants within limits and under terms approved by the General Assembly;

(f) other resources within limits and under terms approved by the General Assembly.

Article 16 Budgetary principles, accounts and audit

1. The financial year of EPOS ERIC shall be the calendar year.

2. The accounts of EPOS ERIC shall be accompanied by a report — laid down by the Executive Director — on budgetary and financial management of the financial year.

3. EPOS ERIC shall be subject to the requirements of the law of the country where it has its statutory seat as regards preparation, filing, auditing and publication of accounts.

Article 18 Liability and Insurance

1. EPOS ERIC shall be liable for its debts.
2. The members are not jointly liable for the debts of EPOS ERIC. The members' and permanent observers' financial liability for the debts of EPOS ERIC shall be limited to their respective contribution provided to the EPOS ERIC as specified in Article 9 of the Statutes.
3. EPOS ERIC shall take appropriate insurance to cover the risks specific to the construction and operation of EPOS ERIC.

ANNEX II BUDGET CONTRIBUTIONS

1. The overall budget for EPOS ERIC operations is composed of the following parts:

EPOS ERIC budget = ECO + ICS-C + STF + ICS-D + TCS

where the individual costs are for:

- ECO: Executive Coordination Office
- ICS-C: Integrated Core Services Central Hub
- STF: Steering Funds for strategic activities
- ICS-D: ICS distributed infrastructure
- TCS: Thematic Core Services operational costs

2. The Nominal annual Total Membership Fee (NTMF) covered in cash by EPOS ERIC members and permanent observers is:

NTMF = ECO - HPECO + ICS-C - HPICS-C + STF + ICS-D + β (TCS)

where:

- HPECO is the Host Premium for the ECO and HPICS-C is the Host Premium for the ICS-C (in total EUR 2 276 000 per year)
- β (TCS) is the fraction of the Thematic Core Services operation costs (TCS) covered through EPOS ERIC

3. The nominal membership fee (nmfi , Table 1) of each member and permanent observer to EPOS ERIC is calculated in euro and on the basis of the following method:

$$nmf_i = 0,5 \frac{NTMF}{NN} + 0,5 NTMF \frac{GDP_i}{\sum_{j=1}^{NN} GDP_j}$$

where:

- GDP_i is the gross domestic product, in Euro, for the country i
- NN is the total number of EPOS ERIC members and permanent observers
- NTMF here is estimated in EUR 4,4 million per year at 2017 prices

The minimum membership fee is set to EUR 50 000/year. Additional contributions above the nominal membership fee are possible.

Should any member decide to withdraw before the end of the first 5-year period (Article 6 of the Statutes), its annual contribution will be increased by 30 %

4. During the first 5-year period of EPOS ERIC, when the contributions will be as set in Table 1, those countries contributing above or below the nominal membership fee will have their voting rights scaled by the ratio between the contributed membership fee (mfi , Table 1) and the nominal membership fee (nmfi , Table 1), the latter capped at EUR 200 000/year for the sole purpose of calculating the voting rights. Full voting rights correspond to 1 (one) vote. Table 1 indicates the annual contributed membership fees and the votes for each member

Table 1
Membership fees per country (1)

Member/ Permanent Observer	GDP (in billion EUR)	GDP (%)	Membership fee (in thousand EUR/year)		Votes
			Nominal (nmf)	Contributed	
Albania	10	0,1	64		
Austria	340	2,0	108		
Belgium	410	2,5	117	80	0,7
Bulgaria	46	0,3	69		
Croatia	44	0,3	69		
Cyprus	18	0,1	65		
Czech Republic	167	1,0	85	85	1
Denmark	266	1,6	98	50	0,5
Estonia	20	0,1	66		
Finland	209	1,3	91	90	1
France	2 181	13,1	350	200	1
Germany	3 033	18,2	462	200	1
Greece	176	1,1	86		
Hungary	110	0,7	77		
Iceland	15	0,1	65		
Ireland	256	1,5	97	97	1
Italy	1 642	9,8	279	200	1
Latvia	24	0,1	66		
Lithuania	37	0,2	68		
Luxembourg	51	0,3	70		
Macedonia	9	0,1	64		
Montenegro	4	0,0	63		
The Netherlands	677	4,1	152	152	1
Norway	348	2,1	110	109	1

3. Summary for EPOS-ERIC

Financial resources of EPOS can be various but within limits and under terms approved by the General Assembly.

Services are provided to everyone, but **non-members & non-observer users shall pay a fee**. This is a difference compared to AnaEE-ERIC where only members do not have to pay a fee.

EPOS receives **revenues from different sources of fundings** that include the membership fees contribution, cash contribution from the host, in-kind contributions from national agencies.

Revenues also include results from **EPOS sustainability plan** that includes implementation of user strategy (access fee and commissioned services), training, the interaction with the private sector and the added value for society.

In 2020, EPOS ERIC revenues from sustainability plan (EPOS SP) was **5%** (€143.497) of EPOS total revenues (€2.940.105). In 2021, EPOS ERIC revenues from sustainability plan (EPOS SP) was **6%** (€163.973) of EPOS total revenues (€2.725.633).

3. BBMRI-ERIC

1. Homepage

BBMRI: Biobanking and Biomolecular Resources Research Infrastructure, November 2013

[Home - BBMRI-ERIC: Making New Treatments Possible](#)

Objective: Putting together biobanks and biomolecular resources into a pan-European facility. Collections of biological resources, such as cells, tissues or biomolecules are considered as the essential raw material for the advancement of biotechnology, human health, and for research and development in life sciences. BBMRI, the pan-European Biobanking and Biomolecular Resources Research Infrastructure, improves the accessibility and interoperability of existing comprehensive collections of biological samples from different (sub)populations of Europe.

2. Activity report (2019) and statutes

Weblink to statutes: [Publications - BBMRI-ERIC: Making New Treatments Possible](#)

Weblink to annual reports: [Publications - BBMRI-ERIC: Making New Treatments Possible](#)

Financial and Services aspects of BBMRI-ERIC extracted from their 2019 annual activity report:

‘Our **financial objectives are to create a sustainable income stream** to achieve BBMRI-ERIC’s strategic goals. **While the membership contributions of roughly 2.8m € support the core services** related to ELSI, IT, QM and the Stakeholder Forum, **the EU funding secures a steady income stream for specialised services and targeted deliverables**. In 2019 eight new EU-funded projects launched, to support major initiatives around sustainability and visibility of research infrastructures (ERIC-Forum, RI-VIS), creating an open collaborative space for digital biology (EOSC-Life), rare diseases (EJP RD), and development and excellence of national structures (CY-Biobank), to name a few. These projects will contribute a total of 4.5m € for the next 7 years and ensure the necessary funding to deliver on our commitments.’

Note: There are no details in the reports on the amount charged for services by BBMRI ; Annual budgets do not show the income from economic activities

Financial and Governance aspects of BBMRI-ERIC’s statutes:

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 3 Tasks and Activities

2. BBMRI-ERIC shall operate the infrastructure **on a non-economic basis**. BBMRI-ERIC may carry out **limited economic activities**, provided that they:

(a) are closely related to its principal tasks;

(b) do not jeopardise their achievement.

3. To fulfil its tasks, BBMRI-ERIC shall in particular:

(a) **grant effective access to its resources and services in accordance with the rules defined in these Statutes to the European research community, composed of researchers from Members;**

(e) establish and operate Common Services for the European biobanking community;

(f) **perform research services for public and private institutions;**

(g) establish and implement technological developments related to the resources and services;

(h) provide training and facilitate mobility of researchers to support the establishment of new Biobanks and Biomolecular Resource Centres to strengthen and structure the European Research Area;

(j) undertake **any other activity necessary to fulfil its tasks.**

4. **The activities of BBMRI-ERIC shall be politically neutral** and guided by the following values: pan-European in scope, combined with scientific excellence, transparency, openness, responsiveness, ethical awareness, legal compliance, and human values.

CHAPTER II FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Article 5 Resources of BBMRI-ERIC

1. The BBMRI-ERIC budget shall fund the common operation of BBMRI-ERIC including the costs of the Director-General, the Central Executive Management Office and the Common Services. It shall be approved by the Assembly of Members through adoption of the Work Programme.

2. The BBMRI-ERIC budget shall consist of:

(a) financial contributions of Members and Observers;

(b) contributions by the Host Member State and the hosting countries of Common Services;

(c) **other income.**

3. **Any income generated in the course of BBMRI-ERIC's activities that accrues to its budget shall be used for advancing the Work Programme** according to the Assembly of Members' decision.

4. Members and Observers shall bear their own costs of participation in BBMRI-ERIC meetings.

5. Each Member and Observer of BBMRI-ERIC shall contribute to the BBMRI-ERIC budget. Unless otherwise agreed by the Assembly of Members, contributions shall be made in cash.

6. **The contribution of each Member shall be in accordance with the membership contribution table that is laid down in Annex III.**

7. The contribution of each Observer shall be 30 % of the full membership contribution as determined in accordance with the membership contribution table that is laid down in Annex III.

10. When in accordance with the Work Programme and the relevant rules as approved by the Assembly of Members, Members may contribute partly in-kind to the common BBMRI-ERIC budget.

11. BBMRI-ERIC is entitled to **accept grants, special contributions and payments from any individual, public or private body for the purposes set out in these Statutes.** They are subject to approval by the Assembly of Members.

Article 8 Budgetary Principles, Accounts and Audits

1. All items of revenue and expenditure of BBMRI-ERIC shall be included in estimates to be drawn up for each financial year and shall be shown in the budget section of the Work Programme. **The revenue and expenditure shown in the budget shall be in balance.**

CHAPTER III GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Article 10 Assembly of Members

6. The Assembly of Members shall:

(a) adopt the annual Work Programme and budget, together with a preliminary Work Programme and budget for the following two years;

(c) adopt all rules, regulations and policies necessary for the sound management of the Work Programme, in particular the access procedure to biological resources, data in Biobanks **and services developed by BBMRI**;

Article 15 Common Services

((5) 'Common Service' means a facility of BBMRI-ERIC according to Article 15(1);)

1. **Common Services shall consist of the facilities of BBMRI-ERIC that provide expertise, services and tools relevant for the pursuance of BBMRI-ERIC's tasks and activities, laid down in the Work Programme.**

2. **Common Services shall be established under BBMRI-ERIC and under the responsibility of the Director- General.**

3. Common Services shall be hosted in countries that are BBMRI-ERIC Members. The selection procedure for hosting Common Services shall follow the principles set out in Annex IV.

4. **Each of the Common Services shall be managed by a director, appointed by the Director-General after consultation with the national delegates of the hosting Member State.**

ANNEX III MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION TABLE

1. **This Annex lays down the mechanism of calculation of the contributions by Members/Observers.** The overall amount of contributions by Members/Observers shall be defined in the annual Work Programme and Budget.

2. The membership contribution shall be composed of a fixed contribution and a variable share.

3. Concerning the fixed contribution there shall be two categories,

(a) Members with less than 3 million inhabitants, or Members that are international organisations, shall pay a fixed contribution according to the lower category; and

(b) Members with 3 million or more inhabitants shall pay a fixed contribution according to the higher category.

4. At the time these Statutes come into effect the fixed contribution shall be:

(a) EUR 20 000 for Members of the lower category; and

(b) EUR 25 000 for Members of the higher category.

5. The fixed contribution for Observers shall be 30 % of the respective category.

6. International organisations shall pay a variable share that will be decided by the Assembly of Members on case-by- case basis.

7. The overall amount of the variable share proportion of Member/Observer States is determined by subtracting the overall amount of fixed contributions of Members/Observers and the variable share of international organisations from the overall amount of contributions by Members/Observers.

8. The overall amount of the variable share is split among Member States based on their percentage of total GDP of all Member States.

9. The calculation of the variable share of Observer States is based on 30% of their respective GDP.

10. **None of the Members shall pay more than 25 % of the overall amount of contributions by Members/Observers.** In case that, according to the above membership contribution model, the contribution of a Member would exceed this level the difference is then distributed among the other Member/Observer States according to their percentage levels of GDP.

3. *Summary for BBMRI-ERIC*

BBMRI's membership fee of roughly 2.8m € supports the core services while EU funding secures a steady income stream for specialised services and targeted deliverables.

Membership and observers fees are calculated based on the number of inhabitants in the country + taking into account the GDP; Host Member State and the hosting countries of Common Services can also provide financial contributions.

BBMRI-ERIC has a non-economic basis, can carry out limited economic activities, closely related to its principal tasks and that do not jeopardise their achievement. **BBMRI-ERIC performs research services for public and private institutions.**

Members of BBMRI have granted access to the services

BBMRI-ERIC is entitled **to accept grants, special contributions and payments from any individual, public or private body for the purposes set out in these Statutes.** They are subject to approval by the Assembly of Members.

Any income generated in the course of BBMRI-ERIC's activities that accrues to its budget shall be **used for advancing the Work Program.** The **revenue and expenditure** shown in the budget shall be **in balance.**

Decisions are taken by the Assembly of Members, including everything related to finance, work program and budget, so **the Assembly of Members shall decide the price of charge for services;** They can be **advised by a Finance Committee.**

4. EMBRC-ERIC

1. *Homepage*

EMBRC: European Marine Biology Resource Center, November 2013

[European Marine Biological Resource Centre | EMBRC](#)

Objective: Provide researchers and companies with access to marine resources and marine organisms, as well as access to cutting-edge services and facilities, including experimental facilities and technological platforms, to study the ocean and develop innovative solutions to tackle societal issues. EMBRC enables researchers to better understand our impact on the oceans and ensure the sustainable use of marine resources.

2. *Activity report (2020) and statutes*

Weblink to statutes: [Publications | EMBRC](#)

Weblink to annual reports: [Publications | EMBRC](#)

Weblink to EMBRC services catalogue: [How to access our services | EMBRC](#)

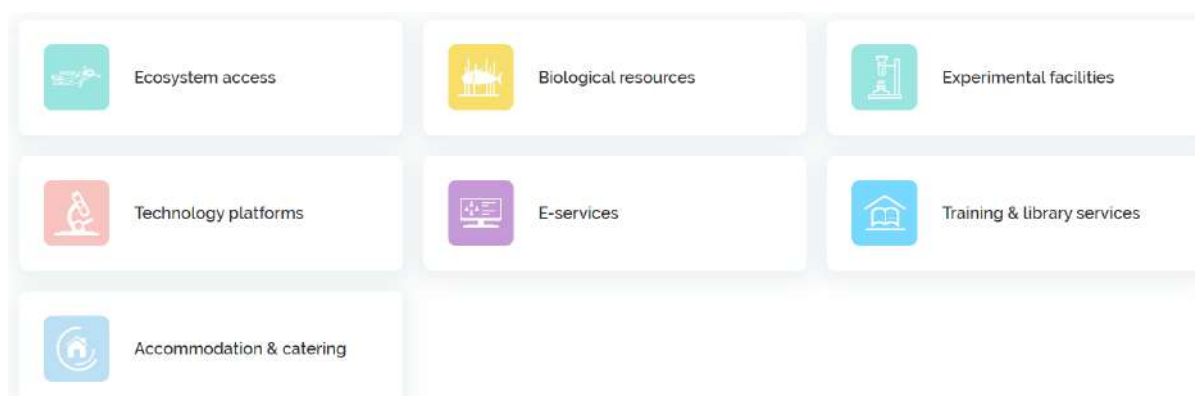
Weblink to charges for services: [Costs & funding | EMBRC](#)

Weblink to services access: [How to access our services | EMBRC](#) ;

Financial and Services aspects of EMBRC-ERIC extracted from their 2020 annual activity report:

EMBRC can provide services and facilities, on-site or remotely, or can be involved as a project partner, supporting both national or European research grants. Using EMBRC services Eligibility & costs EMBRC is open to all researchers and companies worldwide. Service requests are accepted based on eligibility and feasibility. Transparent costing of services and full cost estimates available upon request. **Not-for-profit rates apply to academic research; Full economic costs apply to industry users.**

We provide marine biology services to all interested parties including academic institutions, private sector stakeholders (SMEs, large industry actors), and policymakers in Europe and internationally. All service requests are evaluated for eligibility, feasibility and ethics.



Screenshot of EMBRC services

Scope & costs of services

Services are **billed based on their nature (scope and number) and duration of use**. Access to **data is generally free of charge**. Some of our sites offer on-site accommodation and catering at rates far below market rate (i.e. nearby hotels). All services are billed at the end of use; our liaison officers can send you a quote. All users must come with their own funding.

Funding sources & eligibility

National grants

National research funding can be used for EMBRC services in your home country. Please check with national funders if you can use funding for sites/facilities located outside of your home country.

European grants

All European funding instruments can be used to finance EMBRC services (in your home country or elsewhere in Europe).

International & regional funding

You may be able to use international, regional or foundation funding for EMBRC services. Please check directly with these funders for eligibility regarding the use of a 'research infrastructure' (ie EMBRC).

EMBRC funding

EMBRC occasionally runs transnational access programmes through European-funded projects. These opportunities will be published on our calls page.

Finances

Notes from EMBRC 2020 & 2021 financial reports: Most incomes are from country membership fees and host premium contribution. In 2020, **6.6%** of the total revenues was from external funding. External fundings include projects funded by the EU in which EMBRC was involved. In 2020, total incomes were €1.394.381 and total expenses were €978.942, so **EMBRC saved €415.439**. In 2021, total income was €1.468.066, including €145.021 (**9.8%**) from external projects, while expenses were €1.080.154, so that **EMBRC saved €387.912**. As respect to their statutes, ERICs cannot generate profits, so the excess of one year should be reinjected in the project in the following years.

Next page: Screenshot from EMBRC 2020 activity report – Incomes & incomes from external funding sources

Financial report for 2020

Income

The EMBRC-ERIC budget is financed by nine member countries that contribute in two different ways: through cash contributions and In-Kind contributions. In 2020, according to the budget voted by the General Assembly, the contributions from the member countries amount to:

Membership contributions	2020
Membership fees (amounts in Euros)	
France	€103.482
UK	€106.985
Italy	€91.484
Spain	€79.279
Israel	€69.517
Belgium	€74.777
Norway	€93.602
Greece	€60.988
Portugal	€61.068
Host Premium contribution	
Host Premium cash - France	€300.000
Host Premium In-Kind - France	€260.000
Project income	€92.683
Other	€506
Total contributions	€1.394.381

External funding sources

European project funding is only used to fund projects in which EMBRC is involved:

Project	2020
ERIC Forum	
Direct personnel costs	€2.565
Other direct costs	€1.186
Total	€3.751
RI-VIS	
Direct personnel costs	€3.872
Other direct costs	€2.274
Total	€6.146
EOSC-Life	
Direct personnel costs	€37.540
Other direct costs	€3.067
Total	€41.507
ASSEMBLE Plus	
Direct personnel costs	€39.621
Other direct costs	€402
Total	€40.023
AtlantECO	
Direct personnel costs	€1.255
Other direct costs	€0
Total	€1.255
For all projects	
Direct personnel costs	€84.853
Other direct costs	€7.830
Total	€92.683

Financial and Governance aspects of EMBRC-ERIC's statutes:

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Article 11

Resources of EMBRC-ERIC

1. The resources of EMBRC-ERIC shall be decided by the General Assembly and may be comprised of:

- Member and Observer contributions according to Article 12 of the Statutes;
- income deriving from services and Intellectual Property Rights;
- grants and other resources within limits and under terms approved by the General Assembly; and
- any other contributions, such as donations, which are agreed by the General Assembly.

3. Summary for EMBRC-ERIC

Services are provided to **academic institutions, private sector stakeholders (SMEs, large industry actors), and policymakers in Europe and internationally.**

Not-for-profit rates apply to academic research for accessing the services; **Full economic costs** apply to industry users.

Services are **billed based on their nature (scope and number) and duration of use.** Access to **data is generally free of charge.** Services are billed at the end of use; a **quote for services charge** can be requested to the liaison officers.

Different levels of funding sources are compatible with accessing EMBRC's services: National grants (to access services in the home country), European grants, International & regional funding (depending on eligibility), EMBRC funding (transnational access programmes). Most incomes are from country membership fees and host premium contributions.

5. CLARIN-ERIC

1. Homepage

CLARIN: Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure, April 2018

[Homepage | CLARIN ERIC](#)

Objective: EU language research infrastructure, making digital language resources available to all disciplines. CLARIN, the pan-European Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure, makes digital language resources available to scholars and researchers of all disciplines, in particular humanities and social sciences. It provides a single collection of data and tools which can be accessed by the user through a web application, requiring only one identity and sign-on. Researchers are gaining access to repositories of data with standardised descriptions and processing tools to operate them, as well as to guidance and advice through distributed knowledge centres.

2. Activity report (2021) and statutes

Weblink to statutes: [CLARIN ERIC Statutes | CLARIN ERIC](#)

Weblink to annual reports: [Governance | CLARIN ERIC](#)

Weblink to CLARIN services catalogue: [Services | CLARIN ERIC](#)

Financial and Services aspects of CLARIN-ERIC extracted from their 2021 annual activity report:

Services offered by CLARIN's Knowledge-centres can take different shapes. They all have a helpdesk that will respond to requests within two working days. Some offer online courses, some offer best-practice documents, some offer guidance in getting access to and using data and tools, some are willing to host receivers of CLARIN mobility grants, and there are many more models in which the expertise is offered and shared.

Next page: Screenshot of CLARIN-ERIC's finances from annual report, fees and charges for services are not detailed

Finances

BALANCE 31 December	2021	2020
<i>Assets</i>		
Fixed assets		
Equipment	€9.218	€14.353
Current assets		
Receivables	€349.594	€805.036
Bank accounts	€2.433.250	€2.232.269
Total Assets	€2.792.062	€3.051.658
<i>Equity and liabilities</i>		
Capital and reserves	€1.882.744	€1.870.347
Current liabilities	€909.318	€1.181.311
Total Equity and Liabilities	€2.792.062	€3.051.658
PROFIT and LOSS		
	2021	2020
<i>Income</i>		
Membership fees	€1.302.307	€1.170.309
Projects/other	€213.368	€330.686
Total Income	€1.515.675	€1.500.995
<i>Expenditures</i>		
Personnel and travel costs	€978.710	€817.823
Other	€524.568	€392.209
Total Expenditures	€1.503.278	€1.210.032
RESULT	€12.397	€290.964

The accounts for the participation by CLARIN ERIC and other CLARIN nodes in projects funded by EU programmes are not included in this overview.

Services



CLARIN Portal

Get an example-based impression of what is currently available



Depositing Services

Store language resources in a sustainable repository at a CLARIN centre



Virtual Language Observatory

Discover language resources using a faceted browser or a map



Easy Access to Protected Resources

Get easy access to protected resources, with your institutional username and password



Language Resource Switchboard

Explore and analyse language data with a wide variety of tools



Virtual Collections

Create your own digital bookmarks, ideal for citing data sets



Language Resource Inventory

Submit and access information about



Content Search

Search different corpora with a single search engine



Questions & Answers

Searching for a specific data set or application? Wondering how CLARIN can

Screenshot of CLARIN's services

Funding offered by CLARIN – Weblink to fundings: [CLARIN Funding Hub | CLARIN ERIC](#)

CLARIN offers funding to address strategic priorities that require international collaboration, exchange of expertise, training or mobility.

Financial and Governance aspects of CLARIN-ERIC's statutes:

Article 6 - Members

6.1. Rights of members shall include:

(a) to grant access to CLARIN and all its services to its research community;

(f) to let its research community participate in CLARIN events, such as summer schools, workshops, conferences and training courses, at preferential rates;

6.2. Each member shall:

(a) pay the annual fee as specified in Annex 2;

(h) provide agreed service(s);

(k) promote uptake of CLARIN services among researchers in their country, and gather user feedback and requirements;

(l) support CLARIN centres in the member country by facilitating integration into national and other relevant infrastructures;

6.3. Members who have joined CLARIN ERIC reserving the right to withdraw before the end of the first five years of the establishment of CLARIN ERIC shall pay a higher annual fee as specified in Annex 2.

6.4. Contributions other than the annual fee to CLARIN ERIC may be provided by members individually or jointly in cooperation with other members, observers or third parties. **Such contributions may be made in cash or in kind.**

Article 8 - General Assembly

(f) decide at least every five years on the **principles for calculating the annual fee for each member, and on the amount of the annual fee** of which the principles as well as the corresponding amounts shall be laid down in Annex 2 to these statutes;

Article 18 - Agreements with third parties

18.2. If institutions from non-member countries or other parties as described in Article 18.1 wish to contribute to CLARIN ERIC with expertise, services, language resources and technology, they may apply for an agreement with CLARIN ERIC. **The agreement shall specify a certain service/contribution which the party will make, and specify access rights, subscription fee and other conditions in the light of this contribution.** It shall be a prerequisite that access for users of CLARIN data, tools and services is provided through an agreed upon authentication and authorisation system.

Article 19 - Access policies for users

19.1. Where access for academic researchers in **CLARIN member countries** is concerned, data, **tools and services offered by CLARIN ERIC shall be open to all employees and students in research institutions such as universities, research centres, museums and research libraries**, according to the authorisation of the content providers and through an agreed upon authentication and authorisation system.

19.2. Where access for researchers in **non-member countries** is concerned, the research **institution shall pay a subscription fee in accordance with the principles laid down in Annex 2**, which will give access for all employees and students of the particular institution to CLARIN data, tools and services. It shall be a prerequisite that access for users of CLARIN data, tools and services is provided through an agreed upon authentication and authorisation.

19.3. **Access for other institutions, industry and similar types of specific non-academic users as well as individual academic researchers not belonging to an institution may be granted for a fee.** It shall be a prerequisite that the users of CLARIN data, tools and services are part of an agreed upon authentication and authorisation system.

19.4. **Access for the general public shall be granted** unless the services or resources are constrained by licensing conditions imposed by the owners. Access to metadata and to open source and open access resources shall be granted.

19.5. Even if access is granted according to Article 19.1 to 19.4, **some services and resources may be available against a fee if required by the owner.**

Annex 2 - ANNUAL FEE

Principles

For the initial five-year period **the principles as described below were used to calculate the annual cash contributions by the members, observers and individual institutions in non-member countries** that joined CLARIN ERIC in Year 1 of CLARIN (i.e. 2012). From 2018 onwards till 2022, the same principles are applicable. For countries outside Europe the General Assembly may deviate from the principles. By the end of 2022 the General Assembly shall decide about the calculation method for subsequent periods.

The principles shall be as follows:

- (a) the initial target budget is EUR 1 000 000 per year, based on an estimated participation by 2/3 of the 26 countries represented in the CLARIN Preparatory Phase consortium; if more members join, the General Assembly may decide to lower the contributions or to increase the level of activity;
- (b) the contribution for Year 1 of CLARIN by The Netherlands, as the host country, is EUR 250 000;
- (c) the maximal contribution by other members for Year 1 of CLARIN is EUR 200 000;
- (d) the minimal contribution by members for Year 1 of CLARIN is EUR 11 800;
- (e) the contribution for each member shall be fixed for a period of five years, with an annual increase of 2 % in order to compensate for increase of costs. For each member the exact amount as of 2018 is laid down in Table 2 below;
- (f) members joining in later years shall pay the indexed contribution fixed for that year;
- (g) observers shall pay the minimal indexed membership contribution as specified in Table 1 below;
- (h) individual institutions in non-member countries shall pay the minimal indexed contribution as specified in Table 1 below;**
- (i) in Year 1 of CLARIN the contribution by the Dutch Language Union is EUR 28 600, which is based on the Flemish share in the Union gross domestic product (resulting in EUR 23 600), plus an additional amount of EUR 5 000, as the specific contribution by the Dutch Language Union (as an international organisation);
- (j) the contribution for entities joining in the course of a year shall be proportional to the number of remaining months in that year, starting on the first day of the month of joining;

(k) from 2018 onwards contributions shall be based on the country's GDP in 2016 as a percentage of the Union gross domestic product in that year (based on EUROSTAT), according to the scheme in Table 1.

Table 1: The percentage of Union gross domestic product is rounded to the next integer (UP if less than 5, DOWN otherwise) and multiplied by the minimal contribution:

% of EU GDP	rounded	Contribution in EUR as of 2018
≤1	1	13 289
> 1 and ≤2	2	26 577
> 2 and ≤3	3	39 866
> 3 and ≤4	4	53 154
> 4 and < 6	5	66 443
≥ 6 and <7	6	79 732
etc.
≥16 and < 17	16	212 617
≥17	n/a	225 232

Table 2: Resulting figures for the membership fee for 33 European members

(potential) member	% GDP EU 2016	base contribution 2018	with annual increase of 2 %			
			y2019	y2020	y2021	y2022
Malta	0,07	13289	13 554	13 825	14 102	14 384
Cyprus	0,12	13289	13 554	13 825	14 102	14 384
Iceland	0,12	13289	13 554	13 825	14 102	14 384
Estonia	0,14	13289	13 554	13 825	14 102	14 384
Latvia	0,17	13289	13 554	13 825	14 102	14 384
Lithuania	0,26	13289	13 554	13 825	14 102	14 384
Slovenia	0,27	13289	13 554	13 825	14 102	14 384
Croatia	0,31	13289	13 554	13 825	14 102	14 384
Bulgaria	0,32	13289	13 554	13 825	14 102	14 384
Luxembourg	0,36	13289	13 554	13 825	14 102	14 384
Slovakia	0,55	13289	13 554	13 825	14 102	14 384
Hungary	0,77	13289	13 554	13 825	14 102	14 384
Romania	1,14	26 577	27109	27 651	28 204	28 768
Czech Republic	1,18	26 577	27109	27 651	28 204	28 768
Greece	1,18	26 577	27109	27 651	28 204	28 768
Portugal	1,25	26 577	27109	27 651	28 204	28 768
Finland	1,44	26 577	27109	27 651	28 204	28 768
DLU/Flanders	1,68	32 208	32 852	33 509	34 180	34 863
Ireland	1,79	26 577	27109	27 651	28 204	28 768
Denmark	1,87	26 577	27109	27 651	28 204	28 768
Norway	2,26	39 866	40 663	41 476	42 306	43 152
Austria	2,36	39 866	40 663	41 476	42 306	43 152

3. Summary for CLARIN-ERIC

CLARIN provides a single collection of data and tools which can be accessed by the user through a web application, requiring only one identity and sign-on > Access to CLARIN is controlled by a sign in portal ; Access to ERIC's services are facilitated by user guides.

CLARIN provides services that include: resources, training, expertise, collections, etc

CLARIN publishes annual report, including finances, but they do not detail the fees and charges for services

Notes on CLARIN's annual budgets: *Between 2017 and 2021, the assets and equity/liability are balanced. The membership fee is decided by the general assembly and increases with time as scheduled in the statutes. The income from projects/other is the most variable as it includes projects by users that have been funded (depends on successfully secured fundings or not). Expenditures increase with time so the amount of money saved by CLARIN-ERIC on its annual budget decreases with time, but was between 12k€ & 410k€ for the concerned period.*

CLARIN's member countries and related institutions/users do not pay fee to access CLARIN's services as this is included in the annual fee of the member countries ; Non-member countries users/institutions must pay an access fee, that is defined in the statutes of the ERIC > **for instance here the fee to be paid by non-member country institution is defined as the minimal indexed contribution** ; The fee paid by the member-country depends of their percentage of the Union domestic product. **Access for the general public is granted** unless the services or resources are constrained by licensing conditions imposed by the owners.

6. INSTRUCT-ERIC

1. Homepage

INSTRUCT: Integrated **Structural** Biology, July 2017

[Instruct-ERIC - Structural Biology European Research Infrastructure Consortium](#)

Objective: Instruct-ERIC is a pan-European distributed research infrastructure making high-end technologies and methods in structural biology available to users. The aim is to promote innovation in biomedical science and operate on a non-economic basis within the scope of the ERIC Regulation.

2. Activity report (2020) and statutes

Weblink to statutes: [Statutes of Instruct — European Research Infrastructure Consortium \(Instruct-ERIC\)](#)

Weblink to annual reports: [Welcome to Instruct's press office - Instruct-ERIC](#)

Weblink to INSTRUCT costs and fees of services: [Who can apply - Instruct-ERIC](#)

Financial and Services aspects of INSTRUCT-ERIC extracted from their 2021 annual activity report:

Who can apply to access the research infrastructure?

	Member countries		Non-Member countries	
	Non proprietary research (agree to publish results)	Proprietary research (no requirement to publish results)	Non proprietary research (agree to publish results)	Proprietary research (no requirement to publish results)
Access research infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓
Costs and Funding for Access	Funding contribution available for instrument use, consumables, travel and accommodation	Fee for access at the commercial rate. No requirement to publish.	a) Fee for access at the academic rate b) Arrange a collaboration with one of the Instruct centres	Fee for access at the commercial rate. No requirement to publish.

Screenshot of access types to INSTRUCT services from their website

PROFIT AND LOSS FOR INSTRUCT-ERIC

For Year Ended 31 December 2021

Income	GBP	EUR	Notes
External grant income	260,504	310,349	7
External grant overhead contribution income	65,160	77,628	
Member state contributions	881,827	1,050,557	8
Other miscellaneous income	16,788	20,000	9
Total Income	1,224,279	1,458,534	
Less Cost of Service Provision			
Instruct staff salaries	235,397	280,438	
R&D Pilot awards	116,402	138,675	
JRA awards	-	-	
Access Cost	513,534	611,794	
Instruct Centre Cost	-	-	
Meetings	3,034	3,615	
Project activities	248,367	295,890	10
Total Cost of Service Provision	1,116,734	1,330,412	
Gross Surplus	107,545	128,122	
Less Operating Expenses			
Commissioned services (Insurance, financial, HR, legal)	33,291	39,661	
Conference costs	-	-	
Consultants	129,248	153,979	11
Recruitment costs	30,088	35,845	
Depreciation charge	8,153	9,713	
Foreign Currency (Gains)/Losses	(3,210)	(3,824)	
General admin (postage, copying, bank charges)	1,407	1,676	
Licenses & software	17,478	20,822	
Miscellaneous	10,366	12,350	
Office Stationery	217	258	
Premises and support	56,667	67,510	
Project overhead expenses	17,387	20,714	
Publicity	587	699	
Telephone	1,282	1,527	
Write off IASL balance owed	-	-	
Total Operating Expenses	302,961	360,930	
Net Surplus	(195,416)	(232,808)	

7. Project income including 25% contribution to Instruct-ERIC overheads, against expenditure

8. Membership income receivable

9. ARIA support

10. WIP on research grants. Project activities delivered.

11. Staff costs recharged from the University of Oxford and EMBL

Screenshot of financial report from 2021 INSTRUCT-ERIC ANNUAL REPORT

Financial and Governance aspects of CLARIN-ERIC's statutes:

Article 25 Access Policy

5. Users from non-Members may apply for access using the proposal system. **For academic or pre-competitive research, an academic fee will be charged for access.** Academic fees may also be charged to non-commercial users requesting access through an Intergovernmental Organisation and that are not located in one of the Members.

6. Users requesting access to Instruct infrastructure for proprietary research shall be charged a **commercial fee for access.** In this case, the data arising from access will belong to the user and there shall be no obligation to disclose or publish it.

3. Summary for INSTRUCT-ERIC

Two rates exist for fee access: academic rate and commercial rate; application of one or the other fee depends on the users: member vs non-member and proprietary research vs non-proprietary. Commissioned services include insurance, financial, HR and legal aspects.

7. CERIC-ERIC

1. Homepage

CERIC: Central European Research Infrastructure Consortium, June 2014

[Ceric - home - Ceric \(ceric-eric.eu\)](http://ceric-eric.eu)

Objective: Materials science facilities of Central Europe join resources to offer an integrated service to researchers. CERIC puts together the national multidisciplinary analytical, synthesis and sample preparation capabilities of eight countries - Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania and Slovenia. Serbia is in the process of appointing the Representing Entity. CERIC-ERIC exploits the full scientific potential of the Central European area in the synchrotron light and other microscopic probes for analytical and modification techniques for a broad range of applications in the fields of life sciences, nanoscience and nanotechnology, cultural heritage, environment and materials sciences.

2. Activity report (2021) and statutes

Weblink to statutes: [Documentation - Ceric \(ceric-eric.eu\)](http://documentation-ceric-eric.eu)

Weblink to annual reports: [Documentation - Ceric \(ceric-eric.eu\)](http://documentation-ceric-eric.eu)

Financial and Services aspects of CERIC-ERIC extracted from their 2021 annual activity report:

Following the placement of CERIC in the ERA, the users and the services are described. **While the main service is merit-based, free open access to the instruments, the services also address industrial cooperation, dissemination and training, open access to data and data management, as well as dedicated services to CERIC's partner facilities.** These aim to increase the quality and support the instrumental development of the instrumentation and contribute to better functioning of CERIC.

Income Statement

Financial Revenues

Revenue items primarily identify the portion of the contribution for the financial year allocated by Italy for the Consortium's activities through the public company Area di Ricerca, to cover the expenses of management, as well as the revenues related to projects externally funded.

The Italian contribution for 2021 (€3,005,000.00), recalculated considering the additional activities performed by Elettra-Sincrotrone Trieste S.c.p.A. (€49,607.27) for the spaces used by CERIC for its statutory seat, corresponds to €2,955,392.73. The portion of the FOE 2021 spent in the current financial year corresponds to €1,329,338.34. The remaining part of the general expenses has been covered by FOE funds 2019 for € 412,699.10.

Balance as at 31/12/2020	Balance as at 31/12/2021	Variation
2,757,731.48	2,955,392.73	197,661.25

The composition of the amount at 31.12.2021 is as shown in the following tables:

Category	31/12/2020	31/12/2021	Variation
MIUR ordinary contribution	2,757,731.48	2,955,392.73	197,661.25
FOE funds 2018/2019 spent	245,691.68	412,699.10	167,007.42
FOE funds 2019 to be spent in the following years	-1,598,802.83	-1,626,054.39	-27,251.56
Total	1,404,620.33	1,742,037.44	337,417.11

Category	31/12/2020	31/12/2021	Variation
H2020 ACCELERATE Project	222,079.58	274,493.10	52,413.52
H2020 ERIC Forum Project	47,635.95	58,546.55	10,910.60
H2020 E-RIHS Project	15,260.88	-	-15,260.88
H2020 PaNOSC Project	414,302.79	463,131.89	48,829.10
Commercial services	15,750.00	102,709.10	86,959.10
Changes in inventories	47,826.09	-47,826.09	95,652.18
Other incomes	154.39	598.95	444.56
Total other incomes	763,009.68	851,653.50	88,643.82

Services Costs

It has been decided to divide the item service costs, to facilitate the clarity of the budget, into the following categories of expenses:

Category	31/12/2020	31/12/2021	Variation
External services related to the commercial activity	13,500.00	0.00	-13,500.00
Legal, fiscal and administrative consultancy	33,589.89	13,476.91	-20,112.98
Technical consultancies	1,330.14	5,351.94	4,021.80
Administrative collaborators	-	22,540.00	22,540.00
Scientific and technical collaborators	146,682.03	105,080.00	-41,602.03
Social security contributions of collaborators	36,262.17	38,967.98	2,705.81
Health contribution for collaborators	700.38	468.00	-232.38
ISTAC remunerations	8,464.26	17,857.11	9,392.85
Travel costs for employees, collaborators, and bodies	22,334.87	23,516.19	1,181.32
Travel costs for users	10,231.10	18,967.43	8,736.33
Expenses for corporate meetings	-	-	-
Insurances	10,812.33	10,995.20	182.87
Representation costs	770.90	3,091.38	2,320.48
Consulting and salaries processing	14,025.65	30,719.18	16,693.53
Mobile phones	8,859.39	8,614.20	-245.19
Annual software licenses	2,640.22	2,300.88	-339.34
Workshops, seminars and publications	6,726.99	12,104.10	5,377.11
Canteen expenses	23,895.30	22,568.35	-1,326.95
Bank charges	1,879.83	1,715.59	-164.24
Postal charges	2,081.75	1,977.00	-104.75
Agreement with Universities to support PhDs	49,072.01	278,687.86	229,615.85
Maintenances	94,237.89	2,654.81	-91,583.08
Training costs	3,434.00	619.60	-2,814.40
Transportation services	1,380.00	1,000.00	-380.00
Other costs	13,067.72	184,246.98	171,179.26
Total	505,978.82	807,520.69	290,546.67

Screenshots from CERIC-ERIC's 2021 annual activity report

Note: Commercial services of CERIC-ERIC were 2% of total incomes in 2020, increased to 12% in 2021.

The sustainability plan then reviews the weaknesses and opportunities of CERIC and identifies priority activities, which should contribute to CERIC's sustainability within the next five years. This is complemented by the five-year plan, which involves further development of the user base and the services, monitoring and evaluation of CERIC, and changes to CERIC's business model. The latter, in particular, is deemed as of high risk, since the operations are only funded through the host country's contribution. Thus, **the plan proposes the introduction of membership fees, which are expected to be implemented in 2022, or 2023, and will significantly increase the financial sustainability of CERIC.** The sustainability plan concludes with the financial analysis and projections for the five-year period.

Financial and Governance aspects of CERIC-ERIC's statutes:

Recognising that **offering an integrated and wider set of services**, by further developing and pooling the complementary capacities of these facilities and opening them to the international scientific communities by peer reviewed access, **will further strengthen their Regional and European significance through the beneficial competitive impact through a common high level evaluation**, benchmarking and management, on the socioeconomic and educational development of the entire Region, and through the prevention of brain drain and contribution to possible further industrial developments.

Article 6 Resources

Resources made available to CERIC-ERIC shall consist of:

- a. Contributions in-kind by the Members or Representing Entities for ordinary activities of CERIC-ERIC. On consensus of the General Assembly, financial contributions by the Members or Representing Entities may also be made where the conditions and limits provided for in Article 12 are met.
- b. contributions in-kind and/or financial contributions by Members, Observers and/or other public or private entities for specific projects of CERIC-ERIC. The General Assembly shall approve specific projects and related liabilities pursuant to Article 9. Specific accounting provisions for the in-kind contributions shall apply.
- c. financial grants, supports, contributions from research and development activities. The General Assembly shall adopt rules and procedures for the use of revenue from external contracts and contributions, approved by the General Assembly in accordance with Article 12 (3) (l), in particular from EU funded activities.
- d. **revenues from limited economic activities. CERIC-ERIC may carry out limited economic activities such as joint development of commercial services. These services must be financially self-sustainable and cover initial investments to the extent and duration used for the services. Revenues shall be accounted for separately.**
- e. other entries and financial resources. In order to develop specific activities or projects falling within the scope of Article 5, CERIC-ERIC may take out loans, subject to the General Assembly's approval with qualified majority of the Members, as set out in Article 12.
- f. **gratuities and grants such as those from charities, lottery funds, no-profit entities.** Subject to approval by the General Assembly, CERIC-ERIC shall be entitled to accept grants, special

contributions, gifts, donations and other payments from any natural person or legal entity such as charity or a lottery fund for the tasks and activities set out in the Statutes

Article 8 Users' Access Policy

CERIC-ERIC shall offer external users free open access to the scientific utilities available at the Partner Facilities, through a **common entry point and selection based on international peer-review system**, using solely the criteria of scientific quality of the proposed experiments, thus developing an 'ERA open Operation mode' striving to attract the best international users. To this end **CERIC- ERIC shall take every possible action to ensure 'free open access' to the scientific utilities**. Users requiring and accessing technical and/or scientific services **on a proprietary basis** and/or for training and education may also be accepted if not in conflict with the open access policy and shall pay the appropriate cost of the services. The General Assembly shall establish strategies and procedures for the User Access Policy for both non-proprietary and proprietary research

Article 7 Financial Year, Annual Accounts and Budgetary Principles

CERIC-ERIC shall record the costs and revenues of its economic activities separately and shall charge market prices for them, or, if these cannot be ascertained, full costs plus a reasonable margin. These activities shall not be covered by tax exemptions.

3. Summary for CERIC-ERIC

CERIC has free and commissioned services : most services are free and accessible to scientific users on a merit-base. Charged users are mostly from the industry.

In order to aim towards self-sustainability CERIC will set up a **membership fee**.

Commercial services were 2% of total incomes in 2020, increasing to 12% in 2021.

Diversification of services will **increase the visibility of the ERIC** at regional and European levels

Main incomes are the contributions in-kind or in-cash, of the members and observers of the ERIC; **Alternative incomes are from different sources**: projects, services, donations, grants, etc.

CERIC-ERIC **may also carry out limited economic activities** such as joint development of commercial services. These services must be financially self- sustainable and cover initial investments to the extent and duration used for the services. Revenues shall be accounted for separately. Scientific utilities will remain free open access but access on a proprietary basis permits charging users for a service.

Commissioned services are charged on a market-price plus reasonable margin.

8. SHARE-ERIC

1. Homepage

SHARE: Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe, 2014.

[The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe \(SHARE\): Home \(share-project.org\)](https://share-project.org)

Objective: SHARE is a multidisciplinary and cross-national panel database of micro data on health, socio-economic statuses and social and family networks of about 140,000 individuals aged 50 or older (around 380,000 interviews). SHARE covers 28 European countries and Israel. SHARE is the first European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC). It is hosted by the Munich Center for the Economics of Aging (MEA), Max Planck Institute for Social Law and Social Policy, Germany, and aims

to help researchers understand the impact of population ageing on European societies and thus to help policy makers make decisions on health, social and economic policy.

2. Activity report, statutes, and website

Weblink to statutes & annual reports: [The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe \(SHARE\): SHARE-ERIC \(share-project.org\)](#)

Sources of incomes of SHARE-ERIC extracted from their website:

The SHARE data collection has been funded by the European Commission through the 5th framework programme (project QLK6-CT-2001-00360 in the thematic programme Quality of Life). **Further support** by the European Commission through the 6th framework programme (projects SHARE-I3, RII-CT-2006-062193, as an Integrated Infrastructure Initiative, COMPARE, CIT5-CT-2005-028857, as a project in Priority 7, Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge Based Society, and SHARE-LIFE (CIT4-CT-2006-028812)), through the 7th framework programme (SHARE-PREP (No 211909), SHARE-LEAP (No 227822), M4 (No 261982), and DASISH (No 283646); through **Horizon 2020** (SHAREDEV3 (No 676536), SERISS (No 654221), SSHOC (No 823782), SHARE-COHESION (No 870628), SHARE-COVID19 (No 101015924), RItrain (No 654156) and ERIC Forum (No 823798)) and by DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion through VS 2015/0195, VS 2016/0135, VS 2018/0285, VS 2019/0332, VS 2020/0313, and SHARE-EUCOV: GA No 101052589 is gratefully acknowledged.

Substantial co-funding for add-ons such as the intensive training and retention program and the collection of HRS-harmonised biomarkers was granted by the US National Institute on Aging (U01 AG09740-13S2, P01 AG005842, P01 AG08291, P30 AG12815, R21 AG025169, Y1-AG-4553-01, IAG BSR06-11, OGHA 04-064, BSR12-04 and R01AG052527-02), further funding was granted for the development of a Harmonized Cognitive Assessment Protocol (HCAP) (R01 AG056329-02). **Substantial funding** for the central coordination of SHARE was received from the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF) and the Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Science.

To protect the respondents, SHARE has a strict policy of not accepting funds from commercial enterprises nor does SHARE allow data access to commercial enterprises.

SHARE has been part of the ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures) roadmap and became the first ERIC (European Research Infrastructure Consortium) with the first wave. National funding is now dominant (see below for details), with substantial support by the European Commission's DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities to new SHARE countries.

National funding has been provided by:

Austria: Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft (BMWFW), Austrian Science Foundation (FWF), Österreichische Nationalbank (OeNB) and Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz (BMAK)

Belgium: Wave 4: Belgian Science Policy Administration (BELSPO), Flemish Agency for Innovation by Science and Technology (IWT), University of Liege (ULG) & University of Antwerpen (UA) and Wave 5: The Federation Wallonia-Brussels, The Walloon Region; the Hercules foundation (Flemish Government) and Wave 6: Herculesstichting, L'Institut wallon de l'évaluation, de la prospective et de la statistique (IWEPS), Communauté Française and Belgian Science Policy Office (BELSPO)

Croatia: Ministry of Labour and Pension Systems, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports ; **Czech Republic:** Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports ; **Denmark:** Danish Council for Independent Research – Social Science ; **Estonia:** Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs and Tallinn

University ; **Greece**: General Secretariat of Research and Technology (GSRT) ; **Ireland**: Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences

France: Caisse des dépôts et consignations (CDC), Caisse nationale d'assurance maladie (CNAM), Caisse nationale d'assurance vieillesse (CNAV), Caisse nationale de solidarité pour l'autonomie (CNSA), Commissariat général du plan, Conseil d'orientation des retraites (COR), Direction de l'animation de la recherche, des études et des statistiques du ministère du travail (DARES), Direction de la recherche, des études, de l'évaluation et des statistiques du ministère de la santé (DREES), Institut de recherche en santé publique (IReSP), Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (INSEE), Institut national de prévention et d'éducation pour la santé (INPES), Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche, Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS), Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale (INSERM), Conseil d'Orientation des Retraites (COR) and Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS)

Germany: German Research Fund (grant to research survey methodological questions in Wave 4), Forschungsnetzwerk Alterssicherung (FNA), Volkswagenstiftung, German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF), Max-Planck Society for the Advancement of Science and the German Research Council (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft DFG)

3. Summary for SHARE-ERIC

Main source of funding is the EC **but important funding is also from national agencies**, mainly related to health in their own countries; but also national research agencies. SHARE-ERIC constitutes **a good example of an ERIC that managed to diversify its sources of income.**

SHARE-ERIC does not accept funding from private partners to ensure i) a full independence of the data and the activities carried out in the ERIC, ii) a total control on the data that must be anonymous and preserved given their health and personal characteristics.

8. ELIXIR

1. Homepage

ELIXIR is not an ERIC but was built on a consortium agreement that is very close to an ERIC. Founded in 2013.

[ELIXIR | A distributed infrastructure for life-science information \(elixir-europe.org\)](https://elixir-europe.org/)

Objective: ELIXIR unites Europe's leading life science organisations in managing and safeguarding the increasing volume of data being generated by publicly funded research. As a distributed research infrastructure, ELIXIR coordinates, integrates and sustains bioinformatics resources across its Member countries, and enables users in academia and industry, regardless of location, to freely access services that are vital for their work. ELIXIR is an intergovernmental organisation of 21 Member countries, one Observer country, plus the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL). It is a distributed infrastructure, with a Hub acting as the coordination secretariat, and Nodes in each of the Member countries, plus the European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI), itself a Node.

2. Finances and services of ELIXIR

Weblink to governance: [Governance | ELIXIR \(elixir-europe.org\)](https://elixir-europe.org/governance)

Weblink to funding: [How we are funded | ELIXIR \(elixir-europe.org\)](https://elixir-europe.org/how-we-are-funded)

As a distributed infrastructure, ELIXIR has a **mixed funding model with contributions coming from a number of mostly public sources:**



Collectively, the ELIXIR Hub and Nodes compete for grant funding from the European Union, under Horizon 2020 and the Innovative Medicine Initiative (IMI);

The ELIXIR Hub is funded through membership fees paid by Member countries, and much of this funding is then transferred back to Nodes (e.g. via [Commissioned Services](#)) to [collectively](#) deliver ELIXIR's five-year [Scientific Programme](#); ELIXIR Nodes are typically funded through national-level investments, supporting national coordination, and the development and operation of services;

ELIXIR Nodes also receive support from international funders, such as the US' [National Institute of Health](#) (NIH);

Finally, some ELIXIR Nodes are able to access European Union Structural Funds, for instance to support national coordination and the purchasing of facilities.

Other sources of funding for Nodes include **foundations** (e.g. the Wellcome Trust and Wallenberg Foundation), and also the **industry**, though the latter is modest compared to the public funding received by Nodes.

Long-term sustainability plan

Weblink to ELIXIR's sustainability plan: [Sustainability Plan | ELIXIR \(elixir-europe.org\)](#) - ELIXIR's Long-term sustainability plan (2019) [ELIXIR's ELIXIR's Long-term sustainability... | Documents | F1000Research](#)

Funding models **based on 'access fee'** can only be considered **if the bioinformatics resources in question do not receive funding from sources that require the resource to remain open and free** to all use types (including profit-making uses). However, this is increasingly a requirement of most funding agencies, be them publicly-funded (e.g. European Union grants) or of philanthropic nature. Moving to such an 'access fee' model would hence require a drastic change in the way scientific research is funded, going against years of work to ensure that data, information and knowledge are not behind paywalls. Furthermore, it would create difficulties given the current landscape of centralised bioinformatics resources where ownership of e.g. data and intellectual property rights are complex to assign/determine. **Fee-paying consultancy services, such as providing advice on data management, are increasingly being considered** by resource operators as a way to supplement funds for the maintenance and development of the resources they otherwise provide for free. A number of ELIXIR Nodes already provide such services, or are being encouraged to do so by their national funding agencies. As much of the public funding that goes towards ELIXIR is awarded via short-term, fixed-duration research grants, operating permanent infrastructures and services through these

remains a major challenge. Several actions within this objective relate to ensuring that funding agencies are aware of these challenges, and are encouraged to think of fitter-for-purpose models for sustaining life science data resources, giving due consideration to the nature of the infrastructure (i.e. some well-intentioned models might work well in some contexts but might not do so for ELIXIR).

3. Summary for ELIXIR

ELIXIR has a **mixed funding model with contributions coming from a number of mostly public sources.**

ELIXIR Hub is funded through membership fees paid by Member countries, and much of this funding is then transferred back to Nodes.

ELIXIR Nodes are typically funded through national-level investments, supporting national coordination, and the development and operation of services; Other sources of funding for Nodes include **foundations** (e.g. the Wellcome Trust and Wallenberg Foundation) and **industry**, although modest.

ELIXIR has designed a **long term sustainability plan.**

Funding models **based on ‘access fee’** can only be considered **if the bioinformatics resources in question do not receive funding from sources that require the resource to remain open and free.**

Fee-paying consultancy services, such as providing advice on data management, are increasingly being considered.

03 ANALYSIS OF ERICs STATUTES AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1. ERIC’s economic activity

ERICs have the right to provide services and charge for them while pursuing their principal task on a non-economic basis.

Charging for services does not mean that the ERIC has a commercial activity or an economic basis. An economic activity consists of offering goods and/or services on a given market. The fact that an activity is carried out by a non-profit operator is not enough to avoid classification as an economic activity. Conversely, the fact that a fee might be charged does not in itself render the activity ‘economic’ if the access and related services do not correspond to what the market can provide.

Economic activities and commissioned services can include: Implementation of user strategy (access fee and commissioned services), resources, training, expertise, collections, insurance, financial- HR- and legal- aspects, interaction with private sector, added value for society, etc. Diversification of services will increase the visibility of the ERIC at regional and European levels.

Economic activities shall be limited and closely related to the principal tasks of the ERIC and do not jeopardise their achievement thereof.

Any income generated by ERIC’s activities that accrues to its budget shall be used for advancing the Work Program.

Budget must eventually be balanced, although examples have shown that the balance is not necessarily on a one year time frame – on one year frame some ERICs show profit that they reinject in their funding the year after.

The economic activities of an ERIC must remain secondary and not prevail over the execution of its main task. If an economic activity becomes successful enough to be no longer considered as secondary, an ERIC may consider creating a spin-off company for example.

2. Services users and charges

Policy regarding fees to access services strongly vary across ERICs: Most often ERIC's members that pay an annual fee can access the services for free. Observers sometimes access the services for free or for a fee. Most times for commissioned services, non-members & non-observer users pay a fee.

Access for other institutions, industry and similar types of specific non-academic users as well as individual academic researchers not belonging to an institution may be **granted for a fee**.

Often, **not-for-profit rates apply to academic research** for accessing the services: Make researchers pay may not work: requires time and energy, lack of funding – Services should be provided for free to researchers, maybe on the basis of project proposal and peer reviewing (“merit-based access”). **Full economic costs apply to industry users.**

Thus two rates exist for fee access: academic rate and commercial rate; application of one or the other fee depends on the users: member vs non-member and non-proprietary (free) vs proprietary (charged) research.

Access for the general public is granted for free unless the services or resources are constrained by licensing conditions imposed by the owners. **Access to data is generally free of charge.**

Services can be provided to most users: academic institutions, private sector stakeholders (SMEs, large industry actors), and policymakers in Europe and internationally.

Services are billed at the end of use; a quote for services charge can be requested to the liaison officers.

Commissioned services are charged on a **market-price plus reasonable margin**. An ERIC shall record the costs and revenues of its economic activities separately and shall charge market prices for them, or, if these cannot be ascertained, full costs plus a reasonable margin. This margin may be the margin established by reference to margin commonly applied by undertakings for the same activity. In a similar way than the “reasonable margin” allowed for economic activity charges, the European Charter for access to RIs states that “costs need to be covered and fees for Access, to the extent found necessary, should contribute to the financial sustainability of the Research Infrastructure.”

Whatever decisions are taken at the end regarding charges and fees, the most important is transparency: costs for different services and their provision must be transparent.

3. Origin of ERIC's incomes

ERIC's incomes commonly come from different sources – **the most funding diversification the best to ensure the sustainability of the ERIC.**

- Membership fees are the first and most secured source of income and commonly fund the ERIC's core services: IT, Stakeholder forum, central hubs...

- EU (Horizon Europe, EU funding programs) > Often the EU fundings are steady and are used to fund targeted deliverables and specialised services

- Host Member State and the hosting countries of Common Services can provide contributions (in cash or in kind – contributions in kind shall be evaluated and presented in the financial report on a cash basis)

- Private companies, industry and foundation can also contribute to incomes

Financial resources of ERICs can be various but within limits and under terms approved by the General Assembly.

Revenues from different sources of fundings include: membership fees contribution, cash contribution from the host, in-kind contributions from national agencies, sustainability plan. **SHARE-ERICS constitutes a good example of ERIC that successfully diversified its sources of income.**

Different levels of funding sources: National grants (to access services in the home country), European grants, International & regional funding (depending on eligibility), transnational access programmes.

Sustainability plan: To make the ERIC sustainable by notably diversifying the sources of funding, e.g. implement a user strategy (access fee and commissioned services), training, interactions with private sector, etc. Revenues framed sustainability plans aim to increase with time. Sustainable phase is set-up during the “construction phase”.

Quantitative note on revenues from economic activities:

- Economic activities of the EPOS-ERIC constituted 5% of the total revenue of EPOS in 2020, and 6% in 2021. EMBRC’s 2020 economic activities were 6% of total revenues and increased to 10% in 2021.

- Eventually, **the revenue and expenditure shown in the budget shall be in balance**, although most ERIC’s financial reports either show a balanced budget or a slightly positive budget, with profits that are carried-out in the next year’s budget. For example CLARIN-ERIC shows profits between 12k€ & 410k€ for the 2017-2021 period, with profits progressively decreasing as expenditures increase with the development of CLARIN-ERIC. Similar observations for EMBRC.

ERIC’s interaction with the private sector can be a strategic question: **Some ERIC do not accept funding from private partners to ensure a full independence and total control of the data.**

4. Fees

ERICs memberships fees for members and observers can be defined differently for different ERICs, but annual fees of member-countries are commonly calculated based on the percentage of the Union gross domestic product of the concerned country and/or the number of country inhabitants (details on method’s calculation are provided in ERICs statutes annexes).

Fees for members and non-members must be approved by the Assembly of Members.

Host Member States and the hosting countries of Common Services can also provide financial contributions to the ERIC.

Budgets of ERICs can be advised by a **Finance Committee**

5. Notes on DiSSCo potential funding scheme and fellowship

Funding grants and fellowships exist within ERICs to be attributed to users on scientific merit. But requires that ERICs has enough funding itself to make these funding available to users and so to diversify the sources of fundings. For some ERICs their programs of fundings have been covered by the member countries’ contribution. Other, but limited, sources of funding for internal ERIC’s funding programs can be Horizon Europe and Transnational Access schemes.

If implemented, the funding for training and mobility for DiSSCo’s users should cover costs related to travel and subsistence. Costs of planning and organising training events should also be eligible for funding, including personnel costs associated with the preparation and follow up of training events.

The funding model for ERICs released by the ERIC forum policy brief recommends that if such a funding program is set up in DiSSCo, it should consist in a sustained dedicated budget to finance short term mobility and fellowships, selected upon scientific merit and could be a co-funded model, where European Funding (e.g. Horizon Europe) is combined with national funding (e.g. coming directly from national funding authorities or collected at the level of the national members of DiSSCo).

Short term visits may be 7 to 90 days and have a simple application process. It would be continuous, on a rolling basis, with awards given throughout the year. Criteria for selection on scientific merit would be pre-established. In the case of the user access visits, it would provide funding for travel, accommodation, RI access fees and consumable costs during ERIC use.

It could be in the order of €2.500 to €10.000 per fellowship.

04 ERICs CONSULTATION

In order to obtain additional information on the common practices of existing ERICs regarding their commissioned services, RBINS has led in October and November 2022 a consultation of 8 ERICs and ELIXIR. The aim of the consultation was to answer questions regarding users of commissioned services and tariffications, that could not be answered from the compilation of the ERICs statutes and annual activity reports alone.

The 6 questions of the consultation, their answers by participating ERICs, and a summary of the results of the consultation are presented in the following sections.

1. Questions for consultation on ERICs services and tariffications

1) *What are the services of {name}-ERIC for which a charge/commission is applied?*

2) *Who (what type of user) is charged for these services and who (what type of user) can access these services for free?*

3) *How is the price of the applied charge calculated? Is it calculated based on the market price?*

4) *In the case where the market price cannot be ascertained, or if the proposed service does not exist on the market, the 'Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructures Consortium (ERIC)' allows to charge full cost for the service plus "a reasonable margin".*

What is the maximum range of the margin applied in {name}-ERIC ?

5) *What is the contribution (in %) of the commissioned services to the total incomes of {name}-ERIC?*

6) *What is the volume (in % of the total activities of {name}-ERIC) of the commissioned services carried-out by {name}-ERIC?*

2. ERICs answers to the consultation

1. *What are the services of {name}-ERIC for which a charge/commission is applied?*

BBMRI-ERIC – Interview of BBMRI-ERIC's Former Administrative Director

Question by interviewee: Do we mean services provided by the ERIC or the ERIC's institutions? ERIC's hub provides advice on bioethics as a commissioned service - dedicated to researchers to facilitate their application to EU fundings that require data on bioethics.

CERIC-ERIC – Interview of CERIC-ERIC's User Officers

Charged services include: Instrumentation and facilities, analysis, research co-development and training.

ELI-ERIC - Interview of ELI-ERIC's Executive Director

ELI ERIC operates high-power ultra-short laser facilities for a wide range of scientific applications. Our primary mission is to serve the international scientific user community on a free open access basis. We are allowed however to perform limited economic activities, for which we charge a fee. This relates primarily to the so-called proprietary access, under which industrial users pay for the use of

our facilities and, in exchange for that, are allowed to retain the results without having to make them publicly available.

ELIXIR - Interview of ELIXIR's Outreach Officer – Industry

Most of the resources run by ELIXIR members are free of charge for any user. Some of the compute Platform services, consultancy and expert training services have a cost model (some of which are not in place yet), but these are all administered by the Nodes individually rather than by the ELIXIR organisation as a whole.

EMBRC-ERIC - Interview of EMBRC-ERIC's contact at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences

Example of services : diving team, virtual marine data Access to the services is done by projects – people apply with a scientific project, peer reviewed and granted access on scientific merit – request is made at the central hub who then redirects the users towards the concerned contact for the service.

DARIAH-ERIC - Interview of DARIAH-ERIC's Secretary-General

If you don't consider the annual fees members have to pay to be part of DARIAH ERIC, we don't have services for which a charge/commission is applied.

EPOS-ERIC - Interview of EPOS-ERIC's Coordinator of the Implementation Phase

EPOS ERIC is **NOT** charging any costs to access and use of the data and services made available through its data portal. Access is made available to everyone and users can access to the data and services independently of the countries that have already joined the ERIC. POS ERIC is not going to apply costs to access services and this vision will not change in the near future. EPOS ERIC is implementing its business plan (named sustainability plan) for the operational phase. We do not foresee a change in this strategy in the short term.

LIFEWATCH-ERIC - Interview of LIFEWATCH-ERIC's Finance Officer

At this point in the LifeWatch ERIC implementation process, we do not provide any services/products for which we charge any commission or fee. This is a topic that we do not discard for the future of our organization but, for now, we have nothing really planned about it.

When (if) that moment arrives in the future, we will study the legal and economic implications and procedure with our legal advisors as well as our financial auditors.

CLARIN-ERIC - Interview of CLARIN-ERIC's Executive Director and Financial Officer

No charge is applied for CLARIN services.

2. Who (what type of user) is charged for these services and who (what type of user) can access these services for free?

BBMRI-ERIC

Both researchers and other users are charged for the commissioned services.

CERIC-ERIC

Users can access services for free if they publish their results. Most times industrial users do not publish (proprietary access) and are charged. CERIC-ERIC offers a grant to its users for travel and accommodation. Grant and free access to services are provided through bi-annual calls (competitive, peer reviewed, based on scientific excellence).

ELI-ERIC

Services are available for free to any user (academic or not) who is granted access after independent peer-reviewed evaluation of their proposals. In other words, free access is granted to users on a

scientific merit basis. In exchange for access, users have the obligation to make their results publicly available, ideally via gold open access. We also have a data policy whereby datasets have to be made available publicly after an embargo.

ELIXIR

Everyone can be a user and can use most of the resources without making any form of request. For some services, there may be an enhancement to functionality if the user registers and creates an account, but this is not usually mandatory. For computing resources, the commission and application process could be different depending whether the user's affiliation is academic or from the private sector OR the user is from the host country, or not.

EMBRC-ERIC

Services are accessible to anyone but they mostly work with researchers. They would like to work more with industries and provide more services to private companies but it is not easy to find partners – problem of visibility – still the idea is to develop self-sustainability of the ERIC by getting more alternative incomes.

3. How is the price of the applied charge calculated? Is it calculated based on the market price?

BBMRI-ERIC

Charges for services calculated on the basis of the real costs. The charge includes all real costs: goods, electricity, water, time of the staff... Recipients receive an invoice. It is recommended to provide costs of services even if they are not charged: it is good for transparency and activity reports.

CERIC-ERIC

Prices are calculated directly by the facilities providing the services. Prices are calculated based on direct costs per hour, including everything: goods, staff, etc.

ELI-ERIC

The fee is defined based on the actual costs involved in the performance of the services, plus a reasonable margin. This is in line with the requirements of the RDI Framework for State Aids.

ELIXIR

There is no charge for the majority of the services mentioned above, for the very few ones, the group that runs the service defines the charges. In these cases, the ELIXIR Hub has no role in price setting or the process of charging for the service.

EMBRC-ERIC

Price of the services is without profit: they calculate how much it costs them in detail (all material, electricity, etc) and they charge for this price.

4. How In the case where the market price cannot be ascertained, or if the proposed service does not exist on the market, the 'Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructures Consortium (ERIC)' allows to charge full cost for the service plus "a reasonable margin". What is the maximum range of the margin applied in {name}-ERIC?

BBMRI-ERIC

A typical margin is 10-25%. But service charges should follow the market price, particularly if private companies provide similar services than the ERIC. The margins applied to the charges are defined for each industrial sector. Ways to define the margin within each sector could be to contact the chamber of commerce (to obtain guidance on typical margins within each sector), or to consult activity reports

of the industrial sectors, or again to directly contact competitors to ask them the margins they apply on their charges.

CERIC-ERIC

Services providers (i.e. facilities) decide the margin based on internal rules. Usually margin between 5-10%.

ELI-ERIC

We have not yet defined a policy in this regard. As an emerging facility starting operations, it is in our interest to attract industrial users (within the limits of the ERIC Regulation, of course) and therefore to keep the margin low.

ELIXIR

Not applicable.

EMBRC-ERIC

Only for commercial partners there may be a top up on the price, that is decided with the user and that is not stated in the statutes of the ERIC as a fixed margin.

5. What is the contribution (in %) of the commissioned services to the total incomes of {name}-ERIC?

BBMRI-ERIC

Not applicable.

CERIC-ERIC

1% at the moment, aim to reach 3-5%. But these parameters depend on the services provided and the users attracted: some services are more attractive to users, so more income arises from those services.

ELI-ERIC

At the moment, it is negligible. There is however growing interest from industrial users for selected applications that might generate revenues in the order of around 5% of our operational costs in the longer run.

ELIXIR

ELIXIR is not receiving any income from commissioned services, ELIXIR members who run the services do, if it is applicable.

EMBRC-ERIC

Not applicable.

6. What is the volume (in % of the total activities of {name}-ERIC) of the commissioned services carried-out by {name}-ERIC?

BBMRI-ERIC

Volume of commissioned services should not be more than 20-25% of the ERIC activity, but it is a rule of thumbs.

CERIC-ERIC

Commissioned services is a side activity - by regulation it can not overtake the time of the main activity of the ERIC.

ELI-ERIC

At the moment, it is negligible.

ELIXIR

As a side note, ELIXIR does receive funding from its member states in the form of member state contributions which are calculated based on the Net National Income of each member state. Much of this funding is redistributed to the ELIXIR Nodes.

EMBRC-ERIC

Not applicable.

7. Additional comments or ideas 1

BBMRI-ERIC

3 ways to consider fees: 1) Everything for free ; 2) Some services charged (e.g. government of some countries request that extra analysis from biobanks are charged to the users); 3) Charge a % of the whole services covering personal costs + material costs.

CERIC-ERIC

Analyse prices of similar services provided by industrial competitors and define the costs of the ERIC's services based on the market analysis. It is not recommended to charge the same price if service is the same - should go for a lower price. However higher price can be applied to the services if there is an additional value added up to the service compared to the industrial competitors (e.g. expertise or better capacity). A market analysis of competitors services could represent an advantage to create collaboration with private partners, e.g. by being a facility provider to private companies if the capacities of the ERIC's instruments is of a better level than the private competitor: Providing service to companies can help to make a place on the market while the company improves its facilities.

EMBRC-ERIC

Participation of EMBRC BE is paid by BELSPO to the central hub of the ERIC.

8. Additional comments or ideas 2

BBMRI-ERIC

Consider developing a pay grade for services, with different levels of fees; e.g. 1) Fees = 0 for Member States users ; 2) Charges for users outside the Member States. The fees for the charged users would depend on the economic power of each country. A pay grade for services would engage countries to join the ERIC.

CERIC-ERIC

Charges in CERIC-ERIC are the same for Member State users or not.

EMBRC-ERIC

Users access services through projects + TNA + joint projects.

9. Additional comments or ideas 3

BBMRI-ERIC

Observers should pay a fee. Typical fees for full access to services (mines the right to vote) is between 25-50% of the member's fee. Observer's fee is 33% of member's fees at BBMRI.

CERIC-ERIC

With commercial partners: Possible to define a rule in which a % of time is available for commercial partners in the ERIC facility.

ELIXIR

A subset of ELIXIR Services that have been identified by the ELIXIR Biodiversity Focus Group as resources that you can use to support biodiversity research are the following (found in the corresponding webpage, which will be updated in the upcoming months). With the exception of the computing resources, these are all free to use.

- For deposition of raw and consensus DNA sequence data in the European Nucleotide Archive (ENA) and there is a corresponding free online course.
- As data resources:
 - European Nucleotide Archive (ENA): the ENA provides a comprehensive record of the world's nucleotide sequencing information. It covers raw sequencing data, sequence assembly information and functional annotation. For instance, search by species name to find all sequences for a particular organism. To learn more about how to use the ENA, take their free online course.
 - UniProtKB/Swiss-Prot: search UniProtKB/Swiss-Prot to find protein sequences for a particular organism.
 - MGnify: search MGNIFY using a range of environmental and biodiversity-related variables to retrieve relevant taxonomic, occurrence and abundance measures for a very wide variety of microbial species.
 - EuropePMC: use EuropePMC to search and annotate relevant literature by organism name or other biodiversity-relevant search terms. The search results include full text access to publications where available.
 - SILVA: use SILVA to find and retrieve curated ribosomal RNA sequence data based on the dataset of millions of ribosomal sequences. The data includes genus-level taxonomic classification.
 - ITSOneDB: use ITSOneDB to find and retrieve curated ribosomal RNA ITS-1 sequence data with species identity, based on the carefully assembled dataset of millions of ITS-1 sequences.
 - Marine Metagenomics Portal: search the Marine Metagenomics Portal (MMP) to identify richly annotated and manually curated contextual (metadata) and sequences in connection with the biodiversity of the marine environment.
 - Ocean Gene Atlas (OGA): search the OGA to discover sequencing-derived species distribution and abundance maps for marine organisms.
 - BacDive: search BacDive to find manually curated knowledge about bacterial and archaeal biodiversity including taxonomy, physiology, morphology, molecular biology, isolation sources.
- For making Biodiversity data sets more FAIR:
 - ELIXIR Recommended Interoperability Resources (RIR) help to make your biodiversity data Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable (FAIR).
 - FAIRsharing: find data and metadata standards, inter-related to databases and data policies relevant to biodiversity.
 - Bioschemas: you can use Bioschemas via schema.org markup on your websites so that they are indexable by search engines and other services to make their data more findable.

- For the analysis of Biodiversity data:
 - bio.tools: find biodiversity-specific software and analysis tools via bio.Tools, the ELIXIR tools registry.
 - Galaxy: browse to find workflows that enable biodiversity-relevant data processing and analysis including genome assembly, genome comparison and many other techniques.
 - MGNIFY: access MGNIFY for an automated pipeline for the analysis and archiving of microbiome metagenomic data. This can help determine the taxonomic diversity and functional and metabolic potential of environmental samples.
- Computing resources to help you analyse datasets:
 - de.NBI cloud (ELIXIR Germany) provides access for projects relating to biodiversity.
 - CSC (ELIXIR Finland) cloud services.
 - e-INFRA CZ (ELIXIR Czech Republic) offers supercomputer resources, storage services and distributed compute resources.
 - The European Galaxy server is an open, web-based platform for data intensive research and provides access to compute and storage resources, more than 2,500 different scientific tools, training materials and workflows to guide users.
 - EMBASSY Cloud resources are contributed by EMBL-EBI, as detailed on the European Open Science Cloud, EOSC Marketplace.
 - ExpASy SIB Portal from SIB (ELIXIR Switzerland) provides a ready-to-use slurm workload manager with a scientific software stack.
 - High performance compute and cloud resources provided by IFB (ELIXIR France), includes a federated set of national and regional servers.

3. Summary of ERICs replies

1. *What are the services of {name}-ERIC for which a charge/commission is applied?*

4/9 entities do not charge for services.

Other entities charge for very concrete services, such as: training, expertise, advising, diving team, consultancy, etc. ERICs usually do not charge for the main service they provide (e.g. data) but for specific “secondary” services (e.g. training, consultancy).

Commissioned services are not systematically charged: Exceptions to charges can happen for some users, e.g. merit-based access for researchers, or users that engage to make the results public.

Services are not systematically managed by the ERIC or by the ERIC’s central hub: applications go through the ERIC that then redirect the user towards the concerned node.

2. *Who (what type of user) is charged for these services and who (what type of user) can access these services for free?*

Charged users vary a lot across ERICs.

Most times users are not charged for services. Researchers and academics are in majority not charged for services, but some selection can be operated by the ERIC (e.g. website registration, merit based access, and peer review), or compensation can be asked for free services (mandatory open access publication of the data).

Most times industrial users do not publish (proprietary access) and are charged, but they could access for free if they published.

Free access or not also depends on the statutes of the country of professional residence of the users: member-countries and observers usually do not pay access, while others do.

3. How is the price of the applied charge calculated? Is it calculated based on the market price?

In great majority the charges for services are calculated **based on the real costs and do not imply any profit**. Charges include all the resources offered to the users: goods, electricity, material, water, time of the staff, time spent, etc. Flat rate per hour can be set up for services .

For transparency and activity reports it is recommended to provide costs even for free and to send invoices to the users.

When profit exists for charged services, the profits are “reasonable” in line with official texts (see section 1), and the profit is defined directly by the entity that provides the service (e.g. national or local node).

4. How In the case where the market price cannot be ascertained, or if the proposed service does not exist on the market, the 'Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructures Consortium (ERIC)' allows to charge full cost for the service plus “a reasonable margin”. What is the maximum range of the margin applied in {name}-ERIC?

7/9 entities do not charge services with a margin.

When margins are applied to commissioned services they are between 5-10% or 10-25% depending on the ERICs.

It is usually the service provider that directly calculates both the cost and the potential margin applied.

Generally ERICs recommend to follow the market price for services charges, particularly if private companies provide similar services than the ERIC, then the attractivity is in favour of the ERIC.

Ways to precisely define the margin within each industrial sector would be to contact the chamber of commerce (to obtain guidance on typical margins within each sector), or to consult activity reports of the industrial sectors, or again to directly contact competitors to ask them the margins they apply on their charges.

5. What is the contribution (in %) of the commissioned services to the total incomes of {name}-ERIC?

For 8/9 entities this question is not applicable. 1 entity has 1% contribution. 2 entities have the aim to reach 5%.

6. What is the volume (in % of the total activities of {name}-ERIC) of the commissioned services carried-out by {name}-ERIC?

For all entities the volume of the commissioned services is too low for the question to be applicable. 1 entity suggested that volume of commissioned services should not be more than 20-25% of the ERIC activity, but precising that it is a rule of thumbs.

7. *Additional comments or ideas 1*

3 ways to consider fees: 1) Everything for free ; 2) Some services charged (e.g. government of some countries request that extra analysis from biobanks are charged to the users); 3) Charge a % of the whole services covering personal costs + material costs.

A possibility is to consider a pay grade for services, with different levels of fees; e.g. 1) Fees = 0 for Member States users ; 2) Charges for users outside the Member States. The fees for the charged users would depend on the economic power of each country. A pay grade for services would engage countries to join the ERIC.

Observers should pay a fee. Typical fees for full access to services (mines the right to vote) is between 25-50% of the member's fee. Observer's fee is 33% of member's fees at BBMRI.

8. *Additional comments or ideas 2*

Additional comments on price applied to services

Analyse prices of similar services provided by industrial competitors and define the costs of the ERIC's services based on the market analysis. It is not recommended to charge the same price if service is the same - should go for a lower price. However higher price can be applied to the services if there is an additional value added up to the service compared to the industrial competitors (e.g. expertise or better capacity). A market analysis of competitors services could represent an advantage to create collaboration with private partners, e.g. by being a facility provider to private companies if the capacities of the ERIC's instruments is of a better level than the private competitor: Providing service to companies can help to make a place on the market while the company improves its facilities.

9. *Additional comments or ideas 3*

Additional comments on developing public-private partnership

With commercial partners: Possible to define a rule in which a % of time is available for commercial partners in the ERIC facility, particularly if the ERIC has facilities that can attract partners. In the case of DiSSCo, partnership could be set-up by providing some time to companies in DiSSCo's digitalization centres.

05 CONCLUSION

This report on the financial legal statutes of ERICs and their commissioned services is based on:

- Section 1: The legal texts that frame the ERICs;
- Section 2: The compilation of published data from eight ERICs (AnaEE-ERIC, EPOS-ERIC, BBMRI-ERIC, EMBRC-ERIC, CLARIN-ERIC, INSTRUCT-ERIC, CERIC-ERIC, SHARE-ERIC) and the intergovernmental organisation ELIXIR;
- Section 3: The analysis of the legal documents and ERICs data;

And, finally,

- Section 4: The consultation of 8 ERICs (BBMRI-ERIC, CERIC-ERIC, ELI-ERIC, EMBRC-ERIC, DARIAH-ERIC, EPOS-ERIC, LIFEWATCH-ERIC, CLARIN-ERIC) and ELIXIR, their answers and a summary of the consultation.

The results of this analysis show disparities between ERICs, meaning that there is not one model for all ERICs and that statutes and financial models must be adapted to each ERIC activity.

The main general trends resulting from the ERICs analysis can be outlined here:

- Most ERICs do not charge for services, and when they do, most of them apply the market price.

- Charged users are often from the industry, other users can access for free or on other types of selection (e.g. merit-based or through website registration).

- Commissioned services are allowed but must remain minor compared to the main activity of the ERIC, however it is recommended for the sustainability of the ERIC to develop commissioned services and diversify the sources of incomes of the ERICs by requesting funding to different sources.

- To the questions: what % of margin can DiSSCo make out of its commissioned services and what % of income can DiSSCo make from commercial activity? Answers from other ERICs suggest 10-25% of margin and 5% of income from commercial activity.

Because the financial and funding model must be adapted to each ERIC, a good knowledge of ERICs financial statutes and of the landscape of their commissioned services is required. This knowledge must be supported by a good understanding of the funding sources that are available for ERICs, both from the EU and from non-EU sources.

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