AQUARIUS Transnational Access Calls

Terms and Conditions for Funding

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About this document

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1.1. Eligible costs

1. Funding is provided for accessing the Research Infrastructures owned by the AQUARIUS beneficiaries. For the estimated number of days' access available, please refer to the respective infrastructure profile in the [AQUARIUS RI Catalogue](). There is flexibility to increase length/days of access if well justified and logistically feasible. Additional days may be funded if logistically and economically feasible and/or can be chartered independently of AQUARIUS funding, if agreed with the infrastructure operator.

2. Access to the AQUARIUS research infrastructures (from 01.03.2024 to 29.02.2028) is free of charge for the selected user groups. It covers the entire use of the infrastructures (in some cases with berth restrictions), including the logistical, technological and scientific support for external researchers using the research infrastructure. Furthermore, it includes costs directly incurred to implement the project (e.g. consumables, chemicals, shipping of samples, customs of users own equipment), and other standard operating costs.

3. The access time can be granted in a single stage or in several stages, depending on the recommendations of the AQUARIUS Scientific Expert Panel and Operational Expert Panel.

4. Estimated travel and logistics' budget should be described in the TAP and can include costs such as the scientific party's travel and subsistence costs from their home institution to the infrastructure and back, accommodation and meals en-route and possible freight and logistic costs.

5. The amount of the travelling expenses for the user group and the transport of the equipment to the individual infrastructures can be negotiated after the positive scientific evaluation of the proposal.

6. Accommodation and meals may be provided free of charge during the access period (e.g. on board some Research Vessels) but please check with the infrastructure operator in advance. If this is not the case, accommodation and meals onboard can also be requested as part of the travel and subsistence costs applied for.

There is a limited travel and logistics budget available to cover selected users' direct travel and logistics costs incurred while accessing the infrastructures. The amounts vary for each infrastructure so please check the infrastructure profile page for confirmation.

1.2. Non-eligible costs

The following costs are not eligible, and are NOT REIMBURSED by the AQUARIUS Transnational Access programme or infrastructure operator. Therefore, do NOT include these in the budget:

1. Additional or third-party costs, such as salary costs or personnel costs of any kind, equipment manufacture, repair and rental of (scientific) equipment, sub-contracting and assistance, vaccination and health care costs, publication, overheads and the costs of analysing and evaluating the research samples or results after the TA has been carried out.

2. Insurance costs, or any extra costs of unforeseen circumstances related to travel (e.g. delays or cancellations), bar bills, and other extra services at the place of accommodation. AQUARIUS has no legal responsibility for the health and welfare, including emergency and accident situations, of those who are awarded AQUARIUS Transnational Access.

1.3. Remote Access

Include only logistics costs (freight) into the budget, as in remote access the applicants will not be visiting or using the infrastructures themselves and the infrastructure staff/technicians will do the sampling/monitoring and send the samples/data to the TA users.

1.4. Further Access Conditions

1. **Access time.**

    a) The maximum duration of access granted to a user group requesting visits to the RI offered in AQUARIUS should be less than three months.

    b) The access time funded by AQUARIUS might be extended providing sufficient complementary funding by the applicant for additional days time. The leveraging of funds from other sources for a portion of the total amount of access-time applied for is encouraged and should be clearly stated in the application. However, cross funding from other EU projects is not permitted. The access or work funded already by another EU project cannot be proposed to AQUARIUS funding.

    c) Allocated RI time includes mobilisation in the place of departure and demobilisation at the end of the project (vessels). Please contact the RI operator for concrete calculations of mobilisation/demobilisation time and estimated passage time (vessels) to the work area and include this time in your research plan/number of days' requested.

    d) AQUARIUS funded access may form part of longer cruises or fieldwork with different working groups included. Applicants should incorporate this possibility as required in their proposals when applying for RI access.

    e) If the number of funded units of access is reduced by the AQUARIUS Consortium for any reason or if the Research Infrastructures are prevented from working (e.g. by poor weather or technical difficulties) no form of compensation shall be payable in respect of any time lost. Please note that the RI schedules are subject to change.

2. **Liability**: RI users should note that installation and operation of any equipment that they bring to the RI is done at their own risk, even when it is carried on board or deployed from a research vessel or other kinds of RIs. Further details will be provided during the negotiation phase.

3. **Signature of agreements and affiliation.**

   The institution of the user group leader (PI of an application) has the responsibility to sign the access agreement(s).

   Applicants (and user-groups) must comply with all affiliation regulations. Any change in the user group composition must be notified to AQUARIUS and will be subject to approval.

   The following agreements may be accepted or signed during the negotiation phase:

   a) Acceptance agreement, in which the institution of the user group leader accepts the conditions of the AQUARIUS consortium regarding responsibilities and obligations (e.g. reporting, access conditions, data publication, reimbursement).

   b) Between the PI of a funded project and the RI operator, if applicable. The beneficiary giving access to its infrastructure may require an additional contract laying out terms and conditions of access, detailing the support granted, reporting, liability, applicable safety/security regulations and modalities of payment of travel and subsistence costs of the scientific party.

4. **Ethics:** Regarding the access to infrastructures and any research funded through AQUARIUS, facilitated or executed therein, the ethical standards and guidelines of Horizon Europe will be rigorously applied, regardless of the country in which the research is carried out.

5. **Encouraging integration.**

   a) Users can select an unlimited number of infrastructures from the nine infrastructure categories offered as part of AQUARIUS. The selection and integration of at least two infrastructures from multiple categories is strongly encouraged.

   b) Proposals are strongly encouraged to include scientists from less well-equipped countries and an advanced training or educational element for scientists or technicians in their projects.

   c) Collaboration with researchers from the Ukraine and researchers with refugee status, as well as the inclusion of industry, is encouraged.

6. **Data Management:** Funded TA research projects and user groups will implement data management plans (DMPs) for each TA project, which will be supervised and reviewed by assigned data centres. Researchers from the

awarded projects will be educated in open science practices, European marine data infrastructures, and FAIR standards, services and tools to use for processing, documenting, and ingesting their newly collected marine data and resulting data products.