

Q: Can we apply through a company rather than as a group or user from a research institution?

A: Yes, private companies are eligible to apply. The eligibility criteria listed here: <https://aquarius-ri.eu/eligibility-criteria/> apply to all applicants. If a project is funded, it is important that it is supported by a registered company or institution with which AQUARIUS can conclude a funding agreement.

Q: Can salary be included in the requested budget of a TA project?

A: Salaries cannot be included, the funding available is in the form of infrastructure **access** and a **travel and logistics budget** to cover the User Group's travel & subsistence and logistics such as shipping and freight costs. Specifics of the access are described in the profile page of each infrastructure in the [Infrastructures Catalogue](#)

Q: Can you please elaborate on the international collaboration. How are the user groups counted? User groups with more than four users from different organisations must include partners from at least two different countries (current affiliation). Does this mean two in addition to the on-site participant?

A: The main applicant (PI) and the rest of the group accessing the infrastructure(s) is considered one user group. The user group may consist of only one user or applicant. Only one user and/or one user-group is permitted per project. Any user group with more than four users from different organisations must include partners from at least two different countries (current affiliation). The user group includes all proposal participants applying for access to the infrastructure.

Q: If a consortium consisting of two one-person SMEs (e.g. registered in Poland and Finland) wishes to apply, is such a constellation permitted as a user group under the Transnational Access rules?

A: Yes, this is acceptable. As the SMEs are in Poland and Finland, the infrastructures requested cannot be located in Poland or Finland.

Q: If both companies applying for the AQUARIUS Transnational Access are SMEs (not universities or research institutions), can we designate one of them as the Lead Applicant (PI) and the other as a partner within the same user group?

A: Yes

Q: The eligibility criteria mention the transnational access rule — that the majority of users must work in a country different from the RI providing access. How is “majority of users” calculated in the case of a very small consortium (two users)?

In this case, it's not possible to apply for an infrastructure in either of the countries that the two users are located in.

Q: If applicants from industry or civil society do not have previous academic publications or institutional affiliations, will this affect their evaluation score or eligibility?

A: This will not affect your evaluation score or eligibility.

Q: How is a user group member defined? Only people who are going to use the data. If we are doing fieldwork and need technicians for laboratory analysis, should these technicians be included as members of the user group?

A: A user group member is each person in the group who requires physical on-site or remote access to the infrastructure. In the scenario above, if the technicians will travel to the infrastructure for some reason (e.g. to collect samples) and therefore use some of the available travel & logistics budget, then they should also be listed as a group member but if they're not receiving any AQUARIUS funding to physically or remotely access the infrastructure, they don't need to be included.

Q: Who can submit a TA project via the applications, can anyone do it or does it have to be the PI?

A: The PI or User Group Leader must submit the application form and lead the project if funded. This person should be the point of contact for all formalities and legal aspects related to the funding of a successful project.

Q: Definition of an SME:

A: For the definition, see Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC: micro, small or medium-sized enterprise (SME)

are enterprises

- engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of their legal form (including, in particular, self- employed persons

and family businesses engaged in craft or other activities, and partnerships or associations regularly engaged in an economic activity) and

- employing fewer than 250 persons (expressed in 'annual working units' as defined in Article 5 of the Recommendation) and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.