Storage Research Infrastructure Eco-System

StoRIES TRANSNATIONAL ACCES

Access Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this document is to set out the Access Policy governing Access by researchers and students to the research Facility(ies) in StoRIES. This Access Policy provides procedures for the Access Providers, Applicants, StoRIES Project Participants and Users, including the minimum requirements regarding Healthy, Safety and Environmental issues (HSE) and documentation of test Facility(ies).

The basic principles and objectives of the facility transnational and virtual access are given in the Grant Agreement of StoRIES as well as the European Commission's 'Annotated Model Grant Agreement' AGA. The detailed procedures for implementation are set out in this Access Policy. This policy has been inspired and based on the ECCSEL ERIC Access Policy.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

2.1. OPEN ACCESS

The Access Policy is based on the principle of 'open access'. In this respect, Access is open to all interested researchers, scientists and students based on competition and evaluation of Applications against the criteria listed in Article 4.2.

Access providers set a maximum quantity of Access to their facility to perform Research according to the annual availability they have agreed with StoRIES. StoRIES will follow one general procedure called Peer Review Procedure.

2.2. FAIR, TRANSPARENT AND EFFICIENT ACCESS PROCEDURES

The Access Procedures are based on fair and transparent rules. The Peer Review Committee (the management of StoRIES TNA consisting of Work Package 2 leader and representatives of Working Group 2 and 3) and Selection Panel will deal with the Applications as efficiently as possible.

2.3. CONFIDENTIALITY OF APPLICATIONS

The Access OC and the Selection Panel shall to the extent legally and reasonably possible respect the confidentiality of any information in the Application that has been indicated by the Applicant(s) or the Access Provider as confidential. If reasonably required, additional confidentiality agreement(s) could be concluded in this respect.

2.4. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Peer Review Committee will assess applications for potential conflict(s) of interest, and appropriate measures will be adopted to mitigate or eliminate such conflicts.

3. FACILITIES

3.1. INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE ACCESS PROVIDERS.

The Access Provider provides to StoRIES sufficient accurate and updated information of their Facility(ies). This include at minimum:

- an adequately detailed description of the Facility including capacity, location, services provided, technical details and capability;
- ownership (structure);
- availability and scheduled downtime;
- known Access restrictions for (a part of) the Facility(ies) such as contractual obligations, scheduled shut-downs, ethical requirements etc.;
- requirements concerning any possibly necessary additional (insurance) licenses or permits that would be mandatory for the User to perform an Access or any contractual document(s) that need to be agreed prior to the Access (for example confidentiality agreement);
- (indicative) Access cost(s) as in StoRIES project application;
- details of the Local Contact Person(s);
- the information as stated in Article 7.2 (upon completion of the Access).

The Access Provider is responsible for providing updates of these data/documents to StoRIES in case of change.

3.2. COMPLIACE WITH RULES, REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS OF THE FACILITY(IES)

The Access Provider will ensure with respect to the Facility(ies):

- compliance with all legally applicable European, national and/or local rules, regulations and standards, for example related to HSE and permits;
- appropriate systems are in place for the verification of such compliance.

4. APPLICATIONS

4.1. INFORMATION

The Application form for Access (see Annex 1) should be fully completed by the Applicant(s) and includes, at least, the following information:

- a detailed description of the proposed Research and any other funding for (part of) the project;
- the potential Users(s) (researchers, scientists and/or students) for which the Access is required, including their nationalities, positions, organisations, employers, experience and any other relevant information;
- an estimation of the required time for the Research;
- timeframe of the intended research;
- the Facility to which Access is requested;
- required assistance and services (like sample storage conditions) related to the Access;
- full details of any necessary materials including description of samples and material and substances brought to the Facility visited;
- agreement to comply with all applicable legal obligations, e.g. HSE, travel and visas, and local rules;
- proof of any required insurance;
- requirements regarding confidentiality, intellectual property, access rights and dissemination of the results;
- potential risk(s) related to the Access.

Applicant(s) may be requested to provide additional information as required by the Access Provider in order to evaluate the Application.

StoRIES shall provide model Application Forms for Access to Facilities outlining all required details.

4.2. CRITERIA

Applications will be primarily evaluated in accordance with the Commissions principles "scientific quality, relevance, and uniqueness" and prioritised based on their scientific and technological excellence and their appropriateness towards the objectives of StoRIES and the concerned Facility(ies). Main factors of the Application to be evaluated include the:

- alignment of the Application (including the Research objectives) with the objectives of StoRIES and the related TNA call (including any prioritised research objectives);
- significance, innovation and potential results;
- the projects funding limitations for the Access;
- required time for the Research;
- match between the respective Facility(ies) and the content of the Application;
- extent to which the conceptual experimental framework, design, methods, and/or analyses are adequately developed, well integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the Application;
- the capabilities, track record and experience of the Applicant(s);
- requirement for scientific and technical support;
- efficient use of the Facility and resources;
- the previous use by the Applicant(s) of any Facility;
- any reasonable Access Provider objections to the Access.

4.3. ACCESS PROCEDURE

A general procedure, the Peer Review Procedure, applied in accordance with Article 2.2, will ensure that Applications:

- are ideally initially discussed with the relevant Access Provider(s) in order to verify the project feasibility, the Facility availability and to complete any missing information necessary for the use of the designated Facility;
- are submitted, at least 8 weeks (counting from closing date of the respective call), before the desired period of Access to the StoRIES Peer Review Committee, through electronic submission of the Application Form (facility availability should be agreed beforehand because many facilities need more than 8 weeks planning and have a longer booking horizon);
- are evaluated by the Selection Panel;
- (if necessary) are discussed with the Applicant(s) during which the Applicant(s) can be required to provide missing additional information; and
- will be accepted or rejected by the StoRIES Peer Review Committee within a reasonable term (maximum of 8 weeks from completed application / TNA call closure) on the basis of the recommendations of the Peer Review Committee and in agreement with the Access Provider. A decision of rejection due to a veto of the Access Provider shall be taken on reasonable grounds.

  The evaluation and decision will typically take 4 weeks after the TNA call closure. Under special circumstances this period may be extended to 6 weeks. During the first 4 weeks, StoRIES will receive, review, rate and compare any Applications.

In case the Application has been accepted:

- an invitation for Access, together with detailed instructions and documents, will be communicated by StoRIES to the Applicant(s) within 1 week after the peer review has concluded;
- the Access Agreement will be signed (prior to the Access);
- the Access Summary Report form will be given to the User(s) by the Project Management or the Access Provider. The report contains sections related to the Access schedule, the main results and observations that were achieved, the declaration of any incidents/delay and the User(s) satisfaction level. The Access Summary Report may be different depending of the type of application and facility.
- A list of accepted applications with project title, applicant's organisation and country will be published on the StoRIES website.

In case the Application has been rejected:

- general reason(s) and feedback will be given by StoRIES;
- StoRIES will not enter into further correspondence concerning this decision.

5. GENERAL ACCESS COMMITMENTS

5.1. GENERAL COMMITMENTS OF ACCESS PROVIDERS

Access Providers:

- will provide guidance to User(s) to ensure that any Research related to Access and any material in the custody of the Access Provider during the Access is organised and undertaken within a framework of best practice that recognises the rights of the User(s) and any third parties and takes full account of any related ethical, legal, confidentiality or IPR issues;

- will appoint a Local Contact Person to support the User(s) during the Access;

- will provide support, for example, by provision of manual(s), sample storage, operating procedures, and/or specific training for the use of instrumentation/equipment during Access;

- will inform User(s) about operational requirements and in what form any samples need to be presented;

- will provide User(s) instruction on local HSE and other rules;

- will make clear any equipment that can only be used by Access Provider staff and not by the User(s) and specify how it will assist the User(s) with such equipment;

- have an adequate insurance policy (or similar indemnity in place relating to Access by visiting researchers and, if required, ask for proof of health assurance/assistance and liability coverage or similar from the User(s) prior to the Access; and

- will endeavour to provide Access in accordance with any quantity of availability dedicated to Research agreed with StoRIES and for the concerned Facility(ies) .

5.2. GENERAL COMMITEMENTS FOR USERS

User(s):

- will comply with all (local) applicable laws, regulations, guidelines, procedures and requirements;

- will obtain the required site entrance authorisations, including those concerning materials and equipment, customs clearance procedures and visa requirements;

- are responsible for fulfilling local HSE requirements related to the Research during the Access;

- are responsible for any materials, including samples or equipment brought by such User(s);

- will, if required by the Access Provider, have and be able to demonstrate adequate health assurance/assistance and liability coverage or similar is in place during the Access;

- will comply with reasonable supervision and instructions of the Access Provider and/or the Local Contact Person; and

- complete the Access Summary Report and submit it to the Access Provider(s) and StoRIES within an agreed period

- are responsible for organising travel and housing during the access

6. COSTS

6.1. ACCESS COSTS

6.1.1. FOR THE TNA USERS

For the TNA users of the StoRIES project, the access must be free of charge, trans-national access to research infrastructure or installations for selected users or user-groups. This access must include the logistical,

technological and scientific support and the specific training that is usually provided to external researchers using the infrastructure.

6.1.2. FOR THE FACILITY OWNERS

The Access costs reimbursements by the project will be based on actual costs or unit costs calculation as indicated in the Grant Agreement.

6.2. MATERIAL COSTS

User(s) shall bear all costs related to materials and their transport including samples, and equipment belonging to such User(s) and their insurance.

7. COMMUNICATION AND DOCUMENTATION

7.1. INFORMATION FOR POTETNIAL APPLICANT(S)

StoRIES will promote and widely publish the availability of Access by any suitable means including on the StoRIES website.

7.2. INFORMATION RELATING TO APPLICATIONS

StoRIES maintains to the extent legally possible, and in accordance with its adhesion to EU GDPR, appropriate documentation of the Applications and all Access. This documentation includes records of the names, nationalities, and home institutions of the Applicant(s), as well as the nature and quantity of Access provided to them. At any time, StoRIES respects any legal secrecy obligations related to confidential information, including when communicating about the Applications.

A list of accepted applications with project title, applicants' organisation and country will be published on the StoRIES website.

A list of all received applications with project title, description, applicants' information including organisation and country can be submitted to the Commission as a restricted access document.

8. AGREEMENTS

8.1. ACCESS AGREEMENT

The Access Provider and the User(s) will agree an Access Agreement prior to and for Access to the Facility(ies) that, at least, contains clauses related to:

- The recognition and acceptance by the User(s) and Access Provider, of the present Access Policy without any restriction;

- the extent possible subject to confidentiality the information as stated in Articles 3.1 and 3.2 of the Access Policy;
- the extent possible the information as stated in Article 4.1 of the Access Policy;
- the extent possible the general Access commitments as stated in Article 5.1 and 5.2 of the Access Policy;
- legitimate, justified and valid conditions that have to be met for the Access to be denied or the Access Agreement to be terminated.

In particular:

- delivery date for the Access Summary Report;
- any Access arrangements, conditions and requirements;
- liability;
- insurance;
- confidentiality and non-disclosure;
- delays;
- intellectual property rights;
- labour law;
- documentation (for example the use of a Research notebook);
- use of equipment and samples;
- dispute resolution;
- communication;
- supervision;
- auditing; and
- force majeure;

A template of such Agreement will be provided to the Users and Facility Owners by the WP2 together with the Access approval note.

Storage Research Infrastructure Eco-System

DEFINITIONS:

Access means access to and use of a Facility for Research under StoRIES guidance.

Access Agreement means the agreement as stated in Article 8.1 of the Access Policy.

Access Policy means this Access Policy (D2.3).

Access Provider means an entity that is a project beneficiary or one of their linked third parties and is giving access to one of its Facilities.

Access Summary Report means the project summary and facility evaluation report of the Access that has to be completed by the User(s) at the end of the Access.

Application means an application (proposal) for Access.

Access Procedure(s) means the Access procedures as described in Article 4.3 of the Access Policy (D2.3).

Applicant(s) means a (team of) researcher(s), scientist(s) and student(s) that file(s) the Application or who are named in the application.

Application Form means the form by which the Application has to be filed (included in Annex).

StoRIES Website means StoRIES official website Home | StoRIES (storiesproject.eu).

Facility(ies) means a facility/laboratory (or part of), a resource (or a coherent set of them), together with the related services and equipment, which have been identified as belonging to the StoRIES facilities list. The Facilities are designed to conduct Research (exclusively or not).

General Assembly means the General Assembly of StoRIES.

HSE means health, safety and environment.

Local Contact Person means a scientist that is assigned by the relevant Access Provider as the local contact for the Users.

StoRIES member means a project beneficiary or linked third parties of StoRIES according to the latest version of StoRIES Grant Agreement.

Selection Panel means experts nominated by the Project Management to evaluate an Application.

Peer Review Committee means the management of StoRIES TNA consisting of Work Package 2 leader and representatives of Working Group 2 and 3

Peer Review Procedure means the general Access Procedure named Peer Review Procedure as described in Article 4.3 of the Access Policy.

Project Management means StoRIES Project Management including the WP2 leader.

Research means basic or applied research in the field of ES. For the purpose of this Access Policy, education and training in the field of ES also means Research.

StoRIES refers to the StoRIES project and for obligations the responsible party is Coordinator together and any involved Beneficiaries (i.e. work-package leaders and task leaders) for the responsibilities as described in the EU Grant Agreement. Basis for this is the EU Grant Agreement and the Consortium Agreement which states in article 6.1: "The Coordinator is the legal entity acting as the intermediary between the Parties and the Funding Authority. The Coordinator shall, in addition to its responsibilities as a Party, perform the tasks assigned to it as described in the Grant Agreement and this Consortium Agreement."

User(s) means Applicant(s) who have been granted Access to a Facility. This definition encompasses the Applicant(s) who will physically access the Facility as well as those who will not.

WP2 means the participants of StoRIES WP2 - Transnational and Virtual Access to word-class Research infrastructures.