



Unit Cost for Trans-national Access to RI

*European Commission
DG Research and Innovation
Unit B4 - Research Infrastructures*

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Definition of Research Infrastructures

Facilities, resources and services used by the scientific community for conducting research and innovation in their fields.

They include

- *major scientific equipment or set of instruments,*
- *knowledge-based resources such as collections, archives or scientific data,*
- *e-infrastructures, such as data and computing systems, and communication networks*
- *and any other entities of a unique nature ...*

...essential to achieve excellence in research and innovation

They can be “Single-sited”, “distributed” or “virtual”

and, when relevant, may be used beyond research, e.g. for education or public services.

Trans-national Access (TA)

- **'free of charge' provision of access to a research infrastructure to *selected* researchers or research teams usually working in a country other than the country where the RI is located. TA can be:**
 - **in person ('hands-on'), to users visiting the infrastructure, e.g. access to a research vessel, or**
 - **remote scientific services, no visit needed, e.g. performance of sample analysis**

Virtual Access (VA)

- **'Free of charge' provision of access to widely used resources needed for research that are openly and freely available through communication networks**
 - ***No need for a competitive selection of users and therefore no need to set up a selection panel***
 - ***No need to identify users either. However identification is possible when access provision is subject to specific requirements such as registration, authentication and/or authorisation of users (e.g. for access to sensitive data)***
 - ***No need for users to visit the infrastructure to get access***
 - ***No need to define a unit of access***

Other definitions

- **Installation:** a part or a service of a *research infrastructure* that could be used independently from the rest. A *research infrastructure* consists of one or more installations.
- **Access providers:** a beneficiary or a linked third party that is in charge of providing access to one or more *research infrastructures* or *installations*, or part of them, as specified in Annex 1 to the grant agreement.

and, for trans-national access only:

- **User group:** a research team of one or more researchers, led by a 'user group leader', to whom access to the *installation* is given under the grant.
- **Selected user:** a researcher within a *user group*

Access Costs for trans-national access

➤ **Access costs:** costs incurred by the access provider for the provision of access. They cover:

- the **running costs** of the installation
- costs for **logistical, technological and scientific support** to users' access, including **ad-hoc training** and **preparatory and closing activities** necessary to carry out user's work

and exclude:

- all contributions to the **capital investments** of the infrastructure
- **travel and subsistence** costs incurred for supporting the visits of the selected users to the installation (T&S can be charged as "other costs")

➤ **Three ways to report trans-national access: [Unit Cost decision C(2013)8199] :**

- using a **unit cost** calculated on the basis of **historical access costs**
- reporting the eligible costs **actually** and solely incurred for providing access to the selected user groups
- through a **combination** of the two options above, if a part of the eligible access costs varies significantly between users

Unit Cost for trans-national access (1)

Unit Cost =

average annual total access costs to the installation
average total quantity of access to the installation annually provided

- the **averages** are calculated over the **historical data** of last 2 closed financial years, or in exceptional and justified cases, a different reference period agreed by the EC
 - *periods where the installation was not usable because out of order or under repair shall be excluded*
- the '**total quantity of access**' includes all the units of access annually provided by the installation, including access financed by the Union under previous grant agreements, if any.

Access Cost to be charged to the grant =

units of access provided under the project X unit cost

Unit Cost for trans-national access (2)

Total access costs = direct **historical costs + indirect costs**

Direct costs:

- ✓ administrative, technical and scientific personnel directly assigned to the functioning of the installation and to the support of the users
- ✓ contracts for maintenance and repair of the installation, if not capitalised
- ✓ consumables specifically used for the installation and the users' research work
- ✓ contracts for installation management (e.g. security fees, insurance costs, quality control and certification, ...)
- ✓ supply of energy power and water for the installation
- ✓ general services when they are specifically included in the access provided (library costs, shipping costs)
- ✓ software licence, internet connection or other services for data management and computing when they are needed to provide access services
- ✓ specific scientific services included in the access provided or needed for the provision of access

Indirect costs = 25% of *direct costs* excluding subcontracting costs

Unit Cost for trans-national access (3)

EXAMPLE OF CALCULATION:

- an infrastructure provides **6100 hours** of access in **year N-1** and **5900 hours** of access in **year N-2**
- the **total access costs** (for the provision of above mentioned total quantities of access) in the two years, calculated on the basis of the costs categories listed in the Decision (excluding any contribution to capital investment and travel & subsistence costs of users) are respectively **EUR 3 200 000** and **2 800 000**,

then the unit cost is:

$$\text{Unit cost} = \frac{\text{average (3 200 000, 2 800 000)}}{\text{average (6100, 5900)}} = \frac{3 000 000}{6000} = 500 \text{ €}$$

The access provider can decide to charge a lower unit cost than the one calculated on the basis of the above-mentioned formula (e.g. 450 € instead of 500 €).

Actual access costs for TA

Actual:

- **necessary for provision of access to the selected users**
- **incurred during the project lifecycle**
- **identifiable, verifiable and recorded in the access provider's accounts**
- **reasonable, justified and sound**

Direct costs (personnel, sub-contracts, goods, services):

- ✓ costs of administrative, technical and scientific personnel directly working for the provision of access to the selected users and their support (hours worked for the grant must be recorded)
- ✓ costs of consumables and supplies specifically incurred for the provision of access to the selected users, in particular for carrying out their research work
- ✓ cost of services included in or needed for the provision of access, that are specifically incurred for providing access to the selected users

Indirect costs = 25% of *direct costs* *excluding subcontracting costs*

Combination of actual & unit costs for TA

- **To be used when the cost of some component of the provided access service varies significantly between users or this component is not always requested/ needed. Usually the more variable components are within the specific support to users.**
- **For the calculation of the unit cost only the eligible categories of direct costs referred to in the Decision that are not reimbursed on an actual cost basis may be taken into account.**
- *e.g. in an ocean observation network the costs to mount and dismount a specific sensor in observation points/stations needed for a user work can vary according to the type of sensor and of the location of the station. These costs could be reimbursed as actual costs while the running cost of the observatory network as unit cost*

Support to Access Provision: *under which type of project ?*

- **Integrating Activities: INFRAIA-1-2014**
 - *access provision is a **mandatory component** of the project*
 - *access provision should be implemented in an **integrated and coordinated way** such as to improve the overall services available to the research community*

- **Individual implementation and operation of ESFRI projects (NEW) : INFRADEV-3-2015**

- **Cluster implementation and operation of ESFRI and other relevant RI initiatives (NEW) : INFRADEV-4-2014**
 - *limited to **pilot provision of trans-national access by new research infrastructures** to promote exchange of best practise and service provision harmonization*

Statistics on the use of TA unit cost

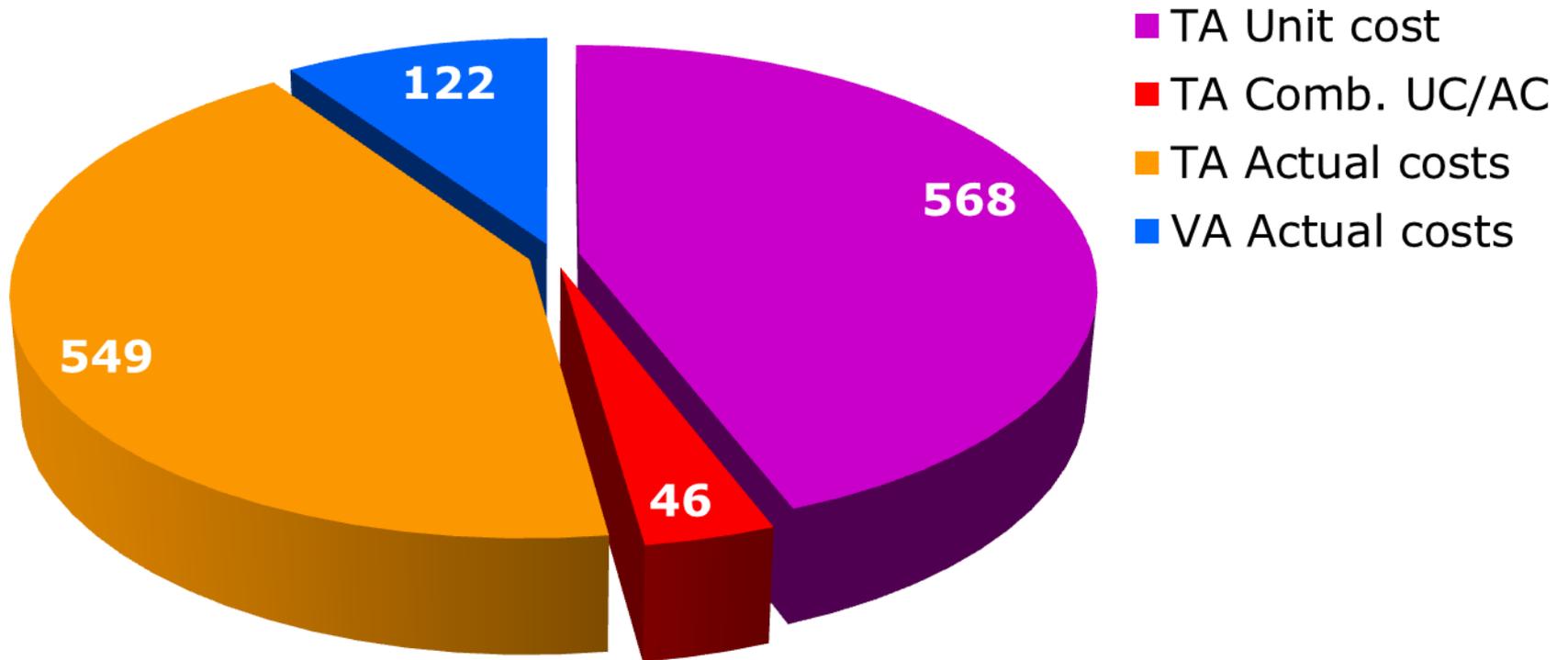
➤ **Integrating Activities - INFRAIA-1-2014**

- *58 eligible proposals*
- *1285 installations offering access: 1163 TA and 122 VA.*
- *TA Access cost calculation methods:
568 UC; 549 AC; 46 combination UC/AC
➔ **614** calculated UC*

➤ **Cluster - INFRADEV-4-2014**

- *9 eligible proposals. Only one with provision of trans-national access to 13 installations*
- *Access costs calculation method: all AC*

Statistics on access costs



TA unit cost

- **Wide range of different units of access**
 - *From the classical ones: **hour, day, week, month,***
 - *to specific ones: **sample, virus, cruise day, beam-hour, ...***
 - *up to very peculiar ones: **magnet shot, marmoset, Lotturn, shuttle run, micro-transfer-printing, ...***

- **Wide range of different unit costs too**
 - *From **EUR 0,01 to EUR 75 000***

Thank you for your attention

Questions ?