# Basic Requirements for Research Infrastructures in Europe

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A contribution by the working group 1 “Access and Standards” of the ESF Member Organisation Forum on Research Infrastructures.

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# Introduction

This document and the requirements listed herein aim at identifying a minimum quality standard for access to research infrastructures (RIs) at the European level. The criteria and issues identified in Part I are independent of the size or kind of RI under consideration. Part II contains specific requirements addressing access to instrumentation and access to data bases / repositories.

The requirements described here are a consensus result of the *Member Organisation Forum on Research Infrastructure*[1] and as such can only be seen as a minimum quality standard that should provide orientation both to funders and to managers of RIs. The requirements are meant to provide a basis for the development of evaluation procedures, but they are not evaluation criteria by themselves.[2] More specific requirements cannot be made on this level as RIs of all kinds and all sizes are addressed.

Not all aspects of establishing, managing or operating an RI are dealt within this set of requirements and recommendations, but rather those that have a direct impact on the external use.

It is important to stress that this list is meant to be a first attempt at collecting relevant issues for the shared use of RIs and that it is anticipated that the ongoing European and national discussions on RI will lead to a continuous update and refinement.

National agencies and European initiatives, first of all the ESFRI projects[3], have partly established or are currently developing specific access models and associated quality assurance procedures. It is hoped that this document is close to a common denominator for all of them and, thus, can also serve as a basis for new models or procedures to be established. The general requirements of this document are meant to be valid for all scientific disciplines and should, therefore, be applicable to all RIs. A common understanding of how RIs can optimally support scientific communities will certainly help in overcoming some problems of fragmentation and heterogeneity in Europe without sacrificing the benefits of diversity and flexibility.

[1] See http://www.esf.org/activities/mo-fora/research-infrastructures.html

[2] An illustrative example is the first requirement that asks for the description of an existing management structure, but does not contain any hints how to assess the answer provided by an RI – the later being a part of the evaluation procedure. Only the existence of a management structure (and a description of it) is

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# Part I: Basic requirements for all RIs with shared access

## *Management*

| No. | Required | Recommended |
|---|---|---|
| M1 | The management structure must be adequate for the size and kind of RI | Dedicated (technical and administrative) manager are recommended for RIs with many projects/users |
| M2 | Skilled staff, both scientific and technical, must support the RI and the user | Career options should be considered / supported. Training should be offered. |
| M3 | The RI has to define an access model that is | |

# Part II: Specific requirements depending on the kind of RI:

## *Access to instrumentation, possibly including investigation of samples*

### Management

| No. | Required | Recommended |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | If access is (physically) limited (e.g. access to instrumentation) and access requests compete, a fair and transparent selection procedure is needed. | Feasibility checks, e.g. by the RI management, are useful.<br>A review panel (independent from the RI management) should decide in a fair and fast procedure on granting access to instrumentation.<br>Constructive feedback should be given to declined applications |

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