

## ERIC Forum 2

### Strategy for collection, curation and stewardship of data, information and knowledge relevant for the reporting platform

Work Package 1 - Deliverable 1.1

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## Executive summary

One of the four pillars of the *Second implementation project for the ERIC Forum* (ERIC Forum 2) is dedicated to developing a centralised online platform that will streamline the monitoring and reporting of data related to European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs). This document sets out a comprehensive strategy for the collection, curation, and governance of relevant data, ensuring that information is managed effectively while maintaining transparency, efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

A key focus of the strategy is data collection, which will rely on a combination of direct input from ERICs and automated data ingestion from various external sources. To ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards, the process will adhere to established data licensing agreements and GDPR regulations, particularly when handling personal information. Beyond collection, data curation presents its own set of challenges. The document recognises the need to keep information accurate and up to date, proposing a structured incentive framework that encourages ERICs to take an active role in maintaining their data. To support this effort, the strategy looks to successful models such as the European Transparency Register, which provides a structured approach to ensuring data reliability over time.

Long-term governance and sustainability are central to the document's vision. To ensure the platform remains operational beyond the lifespan of the ERIC Forum 2 project, a dedicated Working Group within the ERIC Forum governance structure is proposed. This group will take responsibility for overseeing the platform, ensuring that data is well-maintained, and making strategic decisions about its ongoing development. Funding sustainability is also a critical consideration. The document outlines a viable model for financing the platform's technical maintenance, including a cost-sharing model in which ERICs contribute to its upkeep.

Recognising that a well-structured information system relies not just on governance but also on accessibility, the document advocates for the development of detailed technical and user documentation. These resources will provide clear guidance on how ERICs and other stakeholders can interact with the platform, ensuring ease of use and continuity.

Ultimately, the success of this initiative depends on a collaborative effort. The engagement of ERICs, the establishment of a strong governance model, and the implementation of sustainable funding mechanisms will determine the platform's effectiveness. As the project moves forward, technical specifications and governance policies will continue to be refined, ensuring that the platform evolves into a robust and transparent information hub that serves both ERICs and their stakeholders.

## Document log

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## 1. Introduction

One of the four pillars of the *Second implementation project for the ERIC Forum* (ERIC Forum 2) – articulated through WP1, WP2 and WP3 – is the development of a centralised online platform for monitoring and reporting data on the ERICs. The aim and scope was described as follows in the original call for proposals: *“Developing and making available an online platform reflecting the data and knowledge on the ERICs, compliant with FAIR principles with appropriate management of access rights; the platform should notably enable easy upload and update of relevant data and information by the ERICs or their members; the platform should provide effective and tailored access to data and information to the Commission, ESFRI and ERICs stakeholders and the general public.”*

Although the ERICs are recognized for their role in their respective scientific domains, their organisation, activities, impact and contributions to society at large are often not well understood beyond those directly involved. Collecting and curating data on ERICs in a single accessible platform will increase the level and quality of information currently scattered across multiple sources, providing transparency for their stakeholders and the public, as well as visibility for the ERICs themselves. It will also address the issue of fragmentation of information, support governance and enhance coordination within the ERIC community. The platform will also facilitate access to consolidated information and impact assessment for European and national authorities, funding agencies, European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI), research organisations and other stakeholders in the European Research Area (ERA).

Based on interviews conducted with stakeholders’ representatives, deliverable D1.2: *“Requirements to build the reporting platform, including KPI and SEI Needs and Requirements specifications”* identified the user requirements, drafted the design and functionalities of the platform and elaborated its system architecture and components. Delivered at M14 of the project, this document provided the overall concept of the platform, including the user and technological requirements for its development, which will be outsourced to an external company as planned in the Grant Agreement. A call for proposals was carried out in January and February 2025 to request quotes from prospective developers.

However well-thought-out and easy-to-use an information and reporting platform may be, it is only helpful if the data is verified and regularly updated. Such directories typically come into existence to address a specific information-seeking need within a particular community; as time passes and the needs and interests of the community evolve, they might fall out of use, fail to be updated, and consequently be abandoned. This document aims to make recommendations on how to collect, curate and manage data in the future ERIC information platform, precisely to avoid this pitfall. The first part will outline possible strategies for collecting relevant data from multiple sources while ensuring data quality throughout the process. The second section will focus on data curation, namely the organisation and preservation of data to enhance its value and usability over time. The third and last section will look at

data governance, outlining a governance model to ensure the platform's data sustainability beyond the ERIC Forum 2 project.

## 2. Ensuring an efficient data collection

In general, data collection is the process of collecting and evaluating information or data from multiple sources to find answers to research problems, answer questions, evaluate outcomes, and forecast trends and probabilities. In our specific case, the main goal of data collection is to provide the ERICs' stakeholders – such as the European Commission, the ERIC national representatives and the general public – with relevant, reliable, and up-to-date information in a single user-friendly platform to foster transparency, visibility, and cohesion of the ERIC landscape. Once the purpose has been established, and before looking at the data collection process, we need to consider the type of data to be collected.

### 2.1. What data to collect?

One of the key activities of the WP1 was to reflect on the data that will be displayed on the future information and reporting platform. This involved reviewing the data collected during the first ERIC Forum project, interviewing individuals representing the main ERICs' stakeholders to understand what data they would like to see on the platform, and analysing existing data on ERICs scattered across different sources. This work is extensively described in the section 2 "*Data identification for the information platform on ERICs*" of deliverable 1.2, and resulted in a table that describes the data, defines their characteristics, assesses their plurality and indicates their source(s). The table is reproduced in the [Annex I](#) of the present document. Without going into the details of each data item, the categories are as follows:

- **ERIC Identity:** descriptive information about the ERICs, including full name, acronym, logo, establishment date, type of infrastructure, access type, research domain and description of the ERIC;
- **Contact details:** address of the headquarters, contact email, contact phone number;
- **Admin & Legal:** Commission implementing the decision, Statutes, and Internal Rules of Procedure (where publicly available);
- **Outreach:** Website URL, Social media, Annual reports;
- **Members:** Name of country/entity, Type of membership, National Representative Entity;
- **National consortia:** Name of the institution, Country of the institution, Statute of the institution;
- **Financial information:** Cash contributions, in-kind contributions, Total revenue, Total expenses;
- **Services:** List and description of services offered by the ERIC;
- **KPIs and SEI:** Information about Key Performance Indicators and Socio-Economic Impact;

- **EU projects:** Information about EU projects in which ERICs participate or have participated;
- **Publications:** Research outputs related to the ERIC.

The current categories ensure the platform is built around a robust and informative dataset relevant to all ERIC stakeholders. However, it should be noted that the data types that need to be collected will be further refined within WP2 and WP3, as we delve further into elaborating the data model and the specificities of each ERIC.

Two principal methods exist for gathering information for research or analysis: primary and secondary data collection. Primary data collection refers to collecting original data directly from the source, i.e. through direct interaction with the ERICs. This method allows the collection of first-hand information and was referred to in D1.2 as “direct data collection”. Secondary data collection involves using existing data collected by someone else for a purpose different from the original intent. This method was referred to in D1.2 as “automatic data collection”.

## 2.2. Direct data collection

Various techniques for primary data collection can be applied: surveys and questionnaires, interviews, observations, experiments, focus groups, etc. One of the platform's key features, as established in D1.2, is providing a personal interface for each ERIC to enter or update their data at any time. This interface – accessible only upon login, specific to each ERIC – brings together all the above-mentioned data, which are then used to provide content for the public-facing part of the platform. Although the actual development of the platform is still at an early stage, we could imagine that the personal data interface for each ERIC could look as follows:



Organisation
Admin & Legal
Outreach
Members
National Consortia
Finances
...

**ERIC XX**

**Description:**


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**Activities:**

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**Impact:**

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**ERIC logo**


**ERIC acronym**

**ERIC full name**

**Establishment date**

**Type of infrastructure**

**Research domain**

Fig. 1: Provisional mock-up of the personal data interface for each ERIC

This interface empowers the ERICs to independently enter and update their data, fostering autonomy and control over their information presented on the platform. Unlike the current situation where ERICs must go through a third party – the website content manager – to update their data on the ERIC Forum landscape page<sup>1</sup>, this personal space will enable them to take responsibility for the management and quality of their data. This decentralised approach promotes data ownership and ensures that ERICs can maintain the accuracy and relevance of their data. By granting ERICs direct control over their personal interfaces, the platform significantly reduces the risk of errors that a third party could have generated by updating the data.

It is to be noted that thanks to the automatic ingestion of external sources, a large amount of the data in the platform will be pre-populated. This approach simplifies the process for the ERICs, as they will only need to verify the accuracy of the data and revise them where necessary. This streamlined workflow minimises the effort required from the ERICs, ensuring efficient and accurate data management.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eric-forum.eu/the-eric-landscape/> (last accessed on 27.02.2025).

One aspect that must not be neglected and that can help to ensure that the ERICs enter and update their data is creating an appealing, user-friendly interface. User experience (UX) and user interface (UI) design should indeed be given particular attention in the future development of the platform.

### 2.3. Automatic data collection

Automatic data collection is understood as collecting, combining and harmonising data from multiple sources into a unified, coherent format that can be used for analytical, operational and decision-making purposes. This is also a core feature of the platform under development. It should minimise the workload for ERICs and reduce the risk of errors, while ensuring data consistency across different platforms.

The main sources of information on ERICs already available have been described in detail in section 2.2, “*Existing sources of information*”, of deliverable 1.2, the list of which is:

- The websites of each ERIC;
- The ERIC Forum website, in particular its ERIC landscape page;
- The ESFRI Monitoring System (MoS);
- The European Commission website, in particular its ERIC landscape page<sup>2</sup>
- The Horizon Dashboard<sup>3</sup>
- CORDIS<sup>4</sup>
- OpenAIRE Explore<sup>5</sup> / OpenAIRE Research Community Gateway<sup>6</sup> / Zenodo<sup>7</sup>

The data that should be collected as listed in the table in [Annex I](#) are scattered across the above-mentioned sources. While some sources can provide structured data through databases, web applications and application programming interfaces (APIs), some are not built for data-sharing purposes. For the latter, we can imagine using web scraping tools. However, this method has its limits. Scraped data is arranged according to the structure of a specific webpage. Therefore, each time the layout changes, the web crawlers need to be adjusted. As a result, this method requires high maintenance.

The technical specificities associated with each above-mentioned source in terms of automatic data collection will be further explored in WP2, as the solutions will largely depend on the technical development of the platform, which will begin once a service provider has been chosen through the call for proposals. As a large part of the data items in the categories “ERIC identity”, “Contact details”, and

<sup>2</sup> [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/european-research-infrastructures/eric/eric-landscape\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/european-research-infrastructures/eric/eric-landscape_en) (last accessed on 27.02.2025).

<sup>3</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/horizon-dashboard> (last accessed on 27.02.2025).

<sup>4</sup> <https://cordis.europa.eu/> (last accessed on 27.02.2025).

<sup>5</sup> <https://explore.openaire.eu/> (last accessed on 27.02.2025).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.openaire.eu/research-community-gateway-guide> (last accessed on 27.02.2025).

<sup>7</sup> <https://zenodo.org/> (last accessed on 27.02.2025).

“Members” for almost all ERICs are already available on the ESFRI MoS platform, we have already organised a meeting with its technical manager to investigate the technical feasibility of ingesting and populating the platform with data from the ESFRI MoS platform. We learned that thanks to the structure of the database and the APIs they implemented recently, it will be quite easy to retrieve the information and structure it according to our needs (which data items belong to which ERIC). If the technical feasibility of ingesting and populating the platform with data from ESFRI MoS is confirmed through discussions with the relevant personnel, a formal agreement between ESFRI and ERIC Forum will be necessary to establish the required permissions and data-sharing arrangements. The data entrusted to ESFRI by the ERICs cannot indeed be used without their prior agreement. Discussions with ESFRI are currently progressing positively, and we are optimistic about reaching a mutually agreeable solution involving ESFRI, the ERICs, and the ERIC Forum.

## 2.4. Legal considerations

When collecting (and processing) data, it is essential to identify the legal ramifications at play. In our case, there are three main aspects to consider:

- Data licensing: When collecting data from an external source, we should identify under which license the data is shared and what usage of the data is permitted. If the license is missing or restrictive, we should conclude a specific agreement.
- Agreements with data providers and data owners: When collecting data from an external source, we should ensure that, the framework for data sharing, as well as the role and responsibilities of each party, are clearly defined (provided that the license is missing or restrictive).
- Personal data: If personal data is collected through primary or secondary collection methods, we should ensure that our processes comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

### 2.4.1. Data licensing

Data licensing refers to the terms and conditions under which the data can be accessed, utilised, and shared. It is a legal arrangement between the creator of the data and end-user, or the place the data will be deposited, specifying what users can do with the data. Key aspects of data licensing include ownership, scope of use, intellectual property rights, confidentiality, fees, etc. The most commonly and widely used data licences in the research domain <sup>8</sup> copyright licences, which clearly describe how data can and cannot be reused. For example, the most permissive CC license type is the CC-BY, which enables

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<sup>8</sup> <https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/cclicenses/> (last accessed on 27.02.2025).

re-users to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format, so long as attribution is given to the creator. The license allows for commercial use.

In our case, further investigations – as planned within the activities of WP2 – need to be carried out to establish whether the external data sources mentioned in [section 2.3](#) implemented a data license and, if so, which one and what use of the data it allows. If no licence is provided or the licence is too restrictive for our use, we would need arrange a specific agreement with the data provider and, eventually, the data owner.

#### 2.4.2. Agreements with data providers and data owners

Data-sharing agreements clarify the purpose of data exchange, define the data's lifecycle, establish standards, and delineate the roles and responsibilities of all participating parties. In particular, as shortly described in the above section, it should include the following aspects:

- Data ownership: data providers can either maintain ownership and grant usage rights through a license or transfer full ownership to the user.
- Scope of use: the agreement specifies how the data will be used, which may include limitations on geographic scope or duration, for example.
- Data sharing: the agreement determines whether data sharing with third parties is permitted or restricted.
- Data quality and update: the agreement specifies whether the data will be regularly updated or provided as such. Quality maintenance responsibilities can be negotiated between the parties.
- Intellectual property rights: any restrictions, trademarks or other property rights should be covered by the agreement.
- Data security and confidentiality: to safeguard data from unauthorized access and disclosure and to ensure secure handling, the parties should specify which security measures should be implemented, e.g. encryption, access controls, and data protection law compliance.
- Duration and termination: the duration of the agreement and the conditions for termination or renewal should be included. The agreement may include provisions for termination in case of breach of contract.
- Compensation and fees: this should specify whether the data sharing involves financial compensation, and if so, establish the payment conditions.

An agreement with data providers or owners could follow the example of the ESFRI MoS platform, which, to our knowledge, does not have a standardised data licencing framework. We should consider setting up a data-sharing agreement between the ERIC Forum (the data user), ESFRI (the data provider), and each ERIC (the data owners) to regulate the ingestion and use of the ERICs data in the upcoming information and reporting platform, which were initially intended for the ESFRI MoS. We should

nonetheless keep in mind, on the one hand, that the ERIC Forum has no legal personality but represents the interests of all ERICs. On the other hand, ESFRI and ERIC Forum are working towards the same goals. In this configuration, we could envisage that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between these parties would be sufficient to provide a satisfactory framework for all parties. While MoUs are not legally binding documents, they represent an honest commitment by signatories and are drafted as formal legal documents.

### 2.4.3. Personal data

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) governs how the personal data of individuals in the EU may be collected, processed and transferred. It strengthens individuals' fundamental rights in the digital age, giving individuals more control over their personal data. It also lays down the obligation for controllers (those persons or organisations responsible for data processing) to provide transparent and easily accessible information to individuals on the processing of their data. GDPR evidently applies to the ERIC Forum information platform because, even if it is not the primary goal, it will gather personal information on different levels:

- Public-facing personal data: contact details (name, surname and email address) of one or several individuals working in an ERIC. This information was requested by some stakeholders who wanted to be able to contact a director or an operational manager directly. This is particularly the case as ERIC websites often only provide generic emails such as info@xx.eu. Providing this kind of data for all the platform visitors does not receive unanimous support among ERICs. We could imagine restricting the access to such data to authorised users (specific stakeholders), which would protect ERIC employees' personal information. However, it would greatly complicate the platform's access management rights. The debate has not yet been settled.
- Privately stored personal data: contact details (name, surname and email address) of individuals responsible for updating the ERIC personal data interface, in other words the "data steward". This data will not be public information but securely stored on the platform database.

Regardless of the openness of personal data, the GDPR requires controllers – here the ERIC Forum – to notify data subjects whose personal information will be stored in the platform. Therefore, a transparent privacy policy should inform how the platform will process and eventually transfer personal data. Topics to be considered in the privacy policy are:

- What data is collected and how;
- How the data is used and stored;
- Whether it will be used for marketing purposes;
- Protection rights (the right to access, correct, erase, restrict processing and transfer to another organisation);

- Use of cookies;
- Policies of other linked websites;
- Changes to the privacy policy;
- Contact information for the service provider or authorities.

The ESFRI MoS privacy policy<sup>9</sup> is a good example of what our platform policy should address, as it serves a similar purpose.

## 2.5. Quality assurance and quality control

Both quality assurance and quality control are essential for maintaining data integrity. Quality assurance sets the stage for accurate data by focusing on pre-collection processes, whereas quality control monitors data quality throughout and after the collection phase.

Quality assurance is about preventing errors, which is the most effective way to ensure accurate data collection. This is best achieved by establishing a comprehensive and consistent protocol, hence the importance of a detailed data collection procedures manual. Therefore, we plan to create a handbook which, as the actual development of the platform progresses through the activities carried out in WP2 and WP3, will describe in detail the data collection processes outlined in sections [2.2](#) and [2.3](#). This handbook will cover the whole data collection process, which can be visualised as follows:

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<sup>9</sup> <https://mos.esfri.eu/mos/privacy-policy> (last accessed on 27.02.2025).

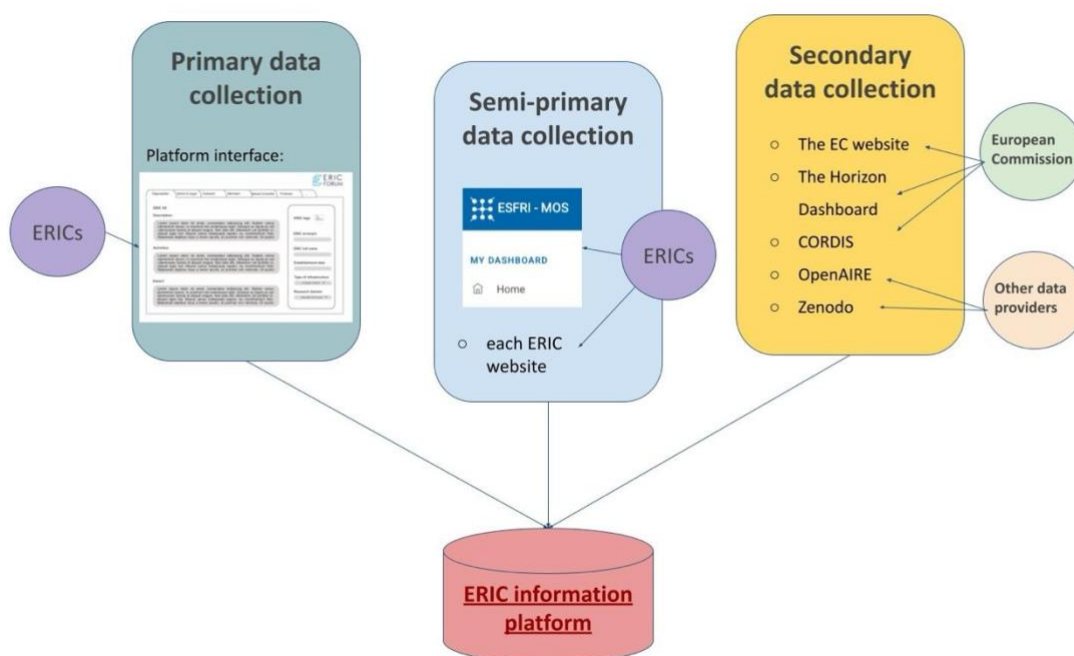


Fig. 2: Data collection process

Data quality control employs various processes and measures to maintain data accuracy, completeness, consistency, and reliability. This involves identifying and correcting errors to ensure data remains fit for its intended use. While quality control actions span both data collection and post-collection phases, their specific execution should be outlined in the procedure manual. Quality control also requires setting up a data governance structure composed of trained individuals who can detect errors or discrepancies and determine the appropriate course of action to fix the flaws, using the guidelines. The data governance of the platform will be addressed in [section 4](#).

### 3. Data curation

Data curation involves the structured organisation and preservation of data. This is crucial for organisations, as it contributes to enhancing data quality, making data more usable and accessible to stakeholders, and supporting data-driven decision-making. Organisations can significantly improve the reliability and trustworthiness of their data by validating and cleansing it on a regular basis. Because data practitioners frequently struggle with the long-term organisation and maintenance of data, it is essential to implement strategies and incentives to carry out the curation work. After analysing the main



challenges inherent to the data curation of the information platform on ERICs, we will suggest an incentive framework to encourage ERICs to maintain and update their data continuously. Finally, we will propose a concrete data curation strategy based on a model that has been proven successful: the European Transparency Register.

### 3.1. Main challenges

Implementing such a platform, which mainly relies on a transparent, responsible and collaborative approach from the ERICs, poses a series of challenges that need to be addressed during the development phase, without losing sight of the issues related to the project sustainability once it is completed.

One of the challenges is represented by the number of ERICs, which is constantly growing. With the recent establishments of CTAO ERIC (Cherenkov Telescope Array Observatory European Research Infrastructures Consortium)<sup>10</sup> and EHRI (European Holocaust Research Infrastructure)<sup>11</sup> in January 2025, there are currently 30 ERICs recognised in Europe and a few more applications in the pipeline, some of them already at a mature phase. While this is, without a doubt, a recognition of a successful model, it raises concerns for the platform curation. Ensuring adequate supervision and data accuracy with limited resources will be difficult. Therefore, collaboration from all the ERICs and, most importantly, an efficient governance model to establish clear roles are crucial in this respect. Our proposed approach is described in [Section 4](#).

While the growing number of ERICs raises issues about the effective governance of the platform, their diversity presents challenges in terms of the multidisciplinary nature of the data to be monitored. Some ERICs are single-sited, others distributed. The newer ones are still in their implementation phases while the older ERICs are in their operational phases. The ERICs cover a wide range of scientific fields, and this variety of disciplines is reflected in how they are structured, in the services they offer to their communities and how they assess their impact. To reflect this diversity, the data model must be flexible, allowing ERICs to tailor their data fields according to their specificities. It, therefore, increases the difficulty of implementing a standardised curation of the platform and this emphasises each ERICs responsibility to look after its own data.

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<sup>10</sup> *Commission implementing decision setting up the Cherenkov Telescope Array Observatory ERIC (CTAO ERIC)*, European Commission, C(2025) 9 final, January 2025, Brussels. [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/commission-facilitates-worlds-largest-and-most-powerful-ground-based-gamma-ray-observatory-2025-01-08\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/commission-facilitates-worlds-largest-and-most-powerful-ground-based-gamma-ray-observatory-2025-01-08_en) (last accessed on 05.02.2025).

<sup>11</sup> *European Holocaust Research Infrastructure becomes 30th EU-Recognised Research Consortium: A major milestone in Holocaust studies*: [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/european-holocaust-research-infrastructure-becomes-30th-eu-recognised-research-consortium-major-2025-01-20\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/european-holocaust-research-infrastructure-becomes-30th-eu-recognised-research-consortium-major-2025-01-20_en) (last accessed on 05.02.25).



ERICs currently need to report all or part of their activities on a multitude of different platforms: at their own level through their website, their annual report, and, to a certain extent, their social media but also at national and European levels through many different platforms such as the ESFRI MoS or stakeholder-dedicated ones. Adding a “new” platform on their long list – although it is more of a radical revamp of the existing ERIC landscape page – will create additional work, especially regarding data curation. In this respect, it is important to identify and address internal and external motivations to prompt ERICs to manage their data in the platform in the long term. This issue will be explored in [section 3.2](#).

The initial funding for designing, developing and implementing the platform is budgeted in the ERIC Forum 2 project. While this amount gives enough room for having a functional platform at the end of the project, the question of sustainability remains, as it will require not only technical maintenance but also community involvement after the project’s completion. As the work for data governance and curation will be mostly, if not exclusively, based on volunteer work, it is important to find a viable governance scenario and appropriate incentives to motivate the ERICs to invest sufficient resources in the maintenance of the platform’s content in the long term.

### 3.2. Incentive framework

The successful implementation of the platform will be measured by its ability to provide high-quality, up-to-date data over the long term. This requires a timely and collaborative approach by all ERICs, which are ultimately responsible for its success, as we rely on them to perform regular updates and quality controls of their data. Given the challenges described above, finding the correct arguments and motivation – in other terms, incentives – to encourage ERICs to invest in the platform seems essential. Beyond the positive and negative incentives, the “carrots-and-sticks” dichotomy, motivation can be internally or externally expressed in several different ways. For instance, it could be related to communication: increasing understanding of objective benefits, celebrating success, providing implementation assistance, or participation: providing opportunities to participate in decision-making that may affect them, promoting ownership and building trust between actors. In this section, we define an incentive framework – a structure of benefits, rewards, or costs – that could motivate ERICs to curate their data on the platform and contribute to its general sustainability.

#### 3.2.1 Participating in a policy and governance instrument

As identified in the Commission expert group of the ERIC Regulation (EGERIC) report<sup>12</sup>, there is a “notable lack of aggregated and coherent data. An approach to governance should include a recurrent,

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<sup>12</sup> European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, *Assessment on the implementation of the Eric Regulation*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2021, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/747211>

*possibly yearly, appraisal made more effective by the availability of updated aggregated data collected and curated in a FAIR approach [...] in a common repository to allow assessment and visibility.”*

Furthermore, the lack of aggregated and coherent data generates three major concerns, according to the report: the capability of the European Commission to fulfil its role of supervisor of the ERICs is limited, the difficulty of newly established ERICs in starting their operations with official status recognised in all member countries, the lack of a policy and governance instrument for the European Commission and Member States.

In this respect, an operational ERIC platform responds to the concerns identified in the EGERIC report. It offers the European Commission and the Member States a **policy and governance instrument to enhance the scientific capability of the European Research Area (ERA)**.

### 3.2.2 Fostering visibility and collaboration opportunities

The platform will contain aggregated and structured information about the ERICs. Each ERIC will have its own dashboard showing a wide range of data, which, in principle, can also be used for communication purposes. Having a set of standardised and personalised data among the ERICs **helps foster their visibility** and can also raise the possibility of initiating **collaboration opportunities** not only with third parties, but within the ERICs themselves. Accuracy of data is fundamental in this respect and is one of the arguments to put forward to keep the platform operational.

### 3.2.3 Committing to transparency and openness

ERICs are non-profit organisations funded with Member State contributions, i.e. European tax-payer money. As such they have at least a moral duty to **commit to transparency and openness** regarding the work they perform and the outcomes they produce. The platform would be a centralised tool to have a transparent overview of all ERICs at once without consulting each research infrastructure's websites.

Moreover, while the ERIC legal form facilitates the establishment and operation of Research Infrastructures with European interest, their structure and governance are nonetheless very difficult to understand for non-specialists. The platform will be an **entry point for the general public** to learn about their organisation and operations.

### 3.2.4 Engaging with stakeholders

The platform can also be seen as a resource for involving ERIC's stakeholders more effectively. For example, national representatives of a given Member country can have several ERICs in their “portfolio”, and having a centralised data platform can be a powerful way to help monitoring and foster data-driven

decision-making. By providing access to relevant and timely data, clear visualisations and interactive dashboards, **ERICs will enable stakeholders to explore data, generate custom reports, and conduct their analyses, facilitating engagement and knowledge sharing.** The platform is also a way of simplifying the work of ERICs' stakeholders, demonstrating their importance and the recognition of their work to support ERICs. This can become a virtuous circle if the stakeholders, in turn, appreciate the usefulness of the platform and share their feedback with the ERICs. This positive feedback will motivate the ERICs to continue contributing and enriching the platform with a broader and more valuable collection of datasets.

### 3.2.5 Demonstrating impact

As outlined by the European Commission in its *Third Report on the Application of Council Regulation (EC) No 723/2009 of 25 June 2009 on the Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium*, published in 2021: “Within the European landscape of RIs, the ERICs are playing an increasingly important role in supporting ground-breaking research and innovation, addressing societal challenges, and helping Europe collaborate and compete globally”<sup>13</sup>. On the one hand, this very positive assessment from a key stakeholder can be seen as a reputational incentive, encouraging ERICs to commit to high-level standards of operation. On the other hand, it shows how important and valuable it is to provide and continuously update data **demonstrating ERICs' scientific impact and contributions to societal challenges.** The platform should display quantitative measures (Key Performance Indicators) as well as qualitative ones, narratives that will effectively communicate to stakeholders the fundamental role of ERICs within the ERA.

### 3.2.6 Ease of use

Throughout deliverable D1.2, we have imagined the information platform on ERICs to be user-friendly both for the providers – the ERICs – or the users – the various stakeholders. **By offering an intuitive interface and simplifying the data collection process, we want to increase the likelihood of data providers contributing valuable information,** allowing ERICs to concentrate on the accuracy and relevance of their data. Moreover, a platform that provides clear documentation for data collection and transparent data governance fosters trust and encourages ongoing participation.

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<sup>13</sup> REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT Third Report on the Application of Council Regulation (EC) No 723/2009 of 25 June 2009 on the Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC), COM/2023/488 final, permalink: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2023:488:FIN>

### 3.2.7 Developing and adhering to a common set of values

External incentives are undoubtedly important, but it is also worth developing internal motivation, for example, by establishing a set of values that will guide the active participation of ERICs in the platform and enable them to be structured around a common and shared values.

**Diversity.** The ERIC community is naturally diverse. ERICs span various disciplinary fields, involve different countries, and have distinct structures, remits and histories. Some have been active for many years, while others are relatively new. The platform seeks to reflect this diversity by allowing each ERIC the opportunity to tailor its narrative, particularly on key topics such as impact assessment and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), while also highlighting common themes and areas of connection.

**Efficiency.** We define it as a balance between the effort required to keep the platform functional and the human and financial resources available. The selection of content, the technical development of the platform, and efforts to automate the updating process as much as possible are aimed at reducing the time and resources each ERIC needs to invest in managing sections efficiently.

**Transparency.** A primary goal of this platform is to gather and share information about the diverse ERIC community to increase visibility. Transparency means ensuring that the platform users, i.e. the stakeholders, clearly understand the data, its context and its sources. To this end, the platform should help users to understand what they see by providing information on the one hand. However, ERICs should, as much as possible, provide accurate as well as contextualised and sourced data.

**Responsibility.** Each ERIC is responsible for updating its data and managing its section on the platform. This is based on the understanding that each ERIC is best placed to represent its own identity, mission, and contribution to the ERA. As such, each ERIC is encouraged to take ownership of its section and actively contribute to shaping the broader narrative of the ERIC Forum.

**Significance.** The data collected aims to highlight the contribution of the ERIC community to the ERA. Each partner must gather relevant and meaningful information that is both identifiable and accessible to stakeholders. Moreover, the data should argue the added value and impact that each ERIC brings – or aspires to bring – to the broader ERA.

### 3.2.8 Using nudges

Currently not much can be done to enforce ERICs to update their data on the platform regularly. We refer here to negative incentives, the “stick” in the “carrot and stick” dichotomy. The ERIC Forum has no hierarchical power over the ERICs, and there is no legal framework that would oblige the ERICs to manage their data on the platform. We would neither delete nor hide information on an ERIC that would not maintain its data. Since some data are constant (for example the establishment date, the research

domain and the Commission implementing decision), it would be important to maintain the page of a non-participating ERIC. However, we could use nudges defined here as small changes in the environment that are easy and inexpensive to implement and that can influence the behaviour and decision-making.

To take a very concrete example related to the platform design, we could make the date of the last time the ERIC updated its data visible in the public-facing page dedicated to an ERIC, i.e. for the stakeholders using the platform. Stakeholders will be able to quickly verify if the information is up-to-date or if it lacks accuracy, as it has not been updated for a significant amount of time.

Another example can be found in the data update process. As requested per the ERIC regulation framework, it is mandatory for ERICs to have a copy of their last statutes updated on their website and statutory seat. As it would be difficult, or not advisable to change the regulation framework, we could set up a nudge to encourage the ERICs to upload their last statutes update on the platform. For that, we could imagine cooperating with the European Commission, (EC), which needs to ratify any changes made by the General Assembly of an ERIC before they can take effect. Every time an ERIC changes its statutes and sends them for approval, the European Commission would remind the ERIC to comply with the regulation framework – publish the statutes on the website and make it available at the statutory seat – but would suggest in parallel to update the statutes on the ERIC platform. The interaction with the EC would be used as an automatic reminder.

### 3.3. The successful model of the Transparency Register

The platform has the objective to provide a wide array of data about the ERICs, so that identified stakeholders can get a detailed overview of the ERIC system and of each ERIC. To ensure that the platform remains efficient over time, procedures need to be set and agreed upon by all ERICs for the continuous update of information. In this respect, we present the model used by the Transparency Register of the European Commission that could be replicated and adapted to ensure qualitative data curation for the ERIC platform.

The Transparency Register is a database listing ‘interest representatives’ (organisations, associations, groups and self-employed individuals) who carry out activities to influence the EU policy and decision-making process. Initially launched in 2008<sup>14</sup>, the registry has been updated several times since.<sup>15</sup> As of December 2024, the Transparency Register counted 13,182 registered organisations, including the ERIC

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<sup>14</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_08\\_988](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_08_988) (last accessed on 05.02.24).

<sup>15</sup> [https://transparency-register.europa.eu/find-out-more/history\\_en](https://transparency-register.europa.eu/find-out-more/history_en) (last accessed on 05.02.24).

Forum. Every organisation engaging in activities with the objective of influencing the legislative or decision-making processes shall register to the database. These activities include:

- organising or participating in meetings, conferences or events;
- participating in consultations or hearings;
- organising communication campaigns, platforms, networks or grassroots initiatives;
- preparing or commissioning policy and position papers, amendments, opinion polls, surveys, etc.

A complete and successful registration requires a certain amount of information to be provided, which is divided into headings summarised in the table in [Annex 2](#).

Once the registration has been validated by the Secretariat, the information in the database is publicly available and can be accessed by stakeholders and the general public. It is recommended to update the registration as soon as there are any changes in the information provided and to review information three times a year (and update if necessary). However, a compulsory update should be performed every year, otherwise the registration is suspended. If the update is not performed 15 days after the suspension, the registration is automatically removed from the register. Six months before the annual update deadline, an automatic reminder to review the registration is sent. Furthermore, the contact person indicated in the registration receives a reminder four and two weeks before the deadline, which is one year after the date of the registration or the last annual update.

Moreover, there are five “golden rules” for registrants:

- **Transparency:** be clear about the profile, composition, affiliation and goals of the organisation;
- **Relevance:** give a clear explanation of the activities that fall within the scope of the register;
- **Accuracy:** provide information in a clear, consistent, complete and accurate manner;
- **Well-structured:** information should be concise but not superficial and shall include links where relevant;
- **Up-to-date:** Information should be updated regularly.

Beyond the fact the set of values we drafted for the use of the platform is similar to the “golden rules”, the example of the Transparency Register is particularly relevant for the work we are carrying out. To ensure data quality and consistency, **the Transparency Register requires a data update at least annually or when relevant changes are identified. We suggest replicating this approach in the ERICs platform.** Updating the platform at least annually will ensure that a reliable set of information is available for stakeholders and help demonstrate a strong commitment to openness and transparency. In the Transparency Register, if an organisation fails to complete the annual update they are removed from the register (and consequently lose the possibility of carrying out activities that have the potential of influencing policy and legislation). While it would not be possible to follow the same approach, due to

the difference of context and power relations, we have designed an incentive framework in section 3.2 to motivate ERICs to keep the platform updated.

Another important lesson from the Transparency Register is the identification of individuals responsible for updating and managing the data, which would require slight adjustments according to the different context to match the situation of the ERIC platform. It is also interesting to notice the requested contacts needed for the registration and platform annual update. The system asks for the following mandatory contacts:

- **Person with legal responsibility:** an individual lawfully authorised to sign documents on behalf of the organisation and/or to represent it in contacts with public authorities. It could be a representative if the organisation has no formal/legal structure.
- **Person in charge of EU relations:** an individual responsible for the organisation's public affairs activities and/or contacts with the EU institutions.
- **Contact person:** an individual responsible for managing the registration and point of contact for the Secretariat with regard to all questions related to the Transparency Register.
- **Persons with access to the registration:** the person who completes the application form, the person with legal responsibility, the person in charge of EU relations and the contact person are automatically added here. As all of these different roles could theoretically be covered by the same person, at least two different emails are required by the system. Furthermore, further email addresses can be added to grant access to additional persons. The reminders for updating the entry are sent to these email addresses. It is also suggested to add a functional mailbox address (e.g. [info@organisation.eu](mailto:info@organisation.eu)) to ensure that notifications are read, and the organisation is not removed from the register.

This approach has been developed to ensure that the reminders are seen by at least two different persons which can then perform the update on time. We suggest using a similar approach for the platform. Each ERIC would need to appoint at least the following contacts:

- a **person with legal responsibility**, similarly as it is done in the Transparency Register;
- a **main contact person (“data steward”)**, responsible for managing their own ERIC dashboard/page and point of contact with regard to all ERIC’s platform-related questions;
- a **secondary contact person (“data steward substitute”)**, to replace the main contact person in case the main contact person is temporarily or definitely unavailable;
- An **institutional generic email address** (e.g. [info@eric.eu](mailto:info@eric.eu)).

By using this approach, we ensure that the information about the regular updates is sent to the appropriate persons. ERICs will also be requested to promptly notify any changes concerning the contact persons to make sure that the information is correctly received. As opposed to the Transparency



Register, no penalties can be imposed to those organisations not updating their entry when requested. Therefore, collaboration from the ERICs is paramount to keep the platform updated and useful for stakeholders.

Although these assumptions shall be verified with the external company developing the platform concerning the technical feasibility (e.g. the possibility of implementing automatic emails, user management, etc.), we recommend implementing the following features:

- **annual mandatory update** and partial updates required for relevant changes (e.g. contacts, Statutes, etc.);
- set-up **automatic reminders** for updating data;
- each ERIC shall provide at least **two different contacts in charge of managing the dashboard/page** of its own organisation.
- define a **clear set of guidelines** and provide proper guidance for performing the updates.

## 4. Data Governance

Data governance provides the essential structure for data curation. It defines the rules, processes, and standards that govern how data is managed, ensuring quality and promoting effective sharing and collaboration. By clearly outlining data ownership, responsibilities, and accountability, governance guarantees consistency and compliance across an organisation. Through a well-defined governance, the ERIC Forum will be able to establish clear data ownership, stewardship, and accountability, as well as enforce data standards and best practices for consistent and compliant operations. In this section, we will propose a governance framework to ensure the effective data management of the platform and its sustainability once the project is complemented. We will also consider scenarios to guarantee the technical maintenance of the platform after the end of the project. And finally, we will analyse what documentation needs to be produced to strengthen governance.

### 4.1. Governance framework

To ensure long-term success, we need to establish a governance model and define roles that seamlessly integrate with the ERIC Forum's current structure. This model will address crucial aspects of the information and reporting platform on ERICs: data collection, data curation, as well as the future technical maintenance. The main mission of the governance structure is to operate the platform after the end of the ERIC Forum 2 project. With regard to technical, scientific and managerial matters, the governance structure should carry out the following activities:



- encourage the uptake of platform by the external stakeholders;
- ensure that data provided by ERICs meets quality, transparency and accuracy standards;
- propose technical solutions and upgrades;
- suggest and recommend the collection of supplementary data;
- receive and process feedback received by users;
- act as the contact point of the ERIC community;
- provide guidance and advice to ERICs towards the data collection;
- maintain appropriate documentation;
- liaise with external data providers and create synergies with other initiatives;
- take strategic decisions concerning financial, technical and policy matters.

Before developing a governance framework specific to the ERICs platform, it is important to summarise the current governance model for the ERIC Forum. The *Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the establishment of the ERIC Forum* (a legally non-binding document) was signed in 2017 in Helsinki by all existing ERICs at that time and it constitutes the basic agreement for the ERIC Forum to operate and is open to every newly established ERIC. To implement the MoU, Rules of Procedures (RoP) were established by the ERIC Forum members. The ERIC Forum is divided into four different bodies:

- The **Forum Assembly** is represented by up to two delegates for each Member and each Forum Member can express only one vote. The Forum Assembly has the power, among others, of taking all the necessary decisions on the Forum organization and for carrying out the common Forum activities, including the setting up of Working Groups and to introduce a budget by unanimous vote.
- The **Forum Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson** are elected by the Forum Assembly;
- The **Forum Executive Board** is composed of up to seven Members, including the Forum Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. All five science clusters are represented in the Board. It oversees the daily management of the ERIC Forum and the implementation of the activities approved by the Forum Assembly;
- **Subsidiary and temporary bodies** (e.g. Working Groups).

Based on the existing MoU which regulates the ERIC Forum, the most effective scenario would be to **set up a Working Group** committed to the governance of the platform, which will be supported by the **Forum Executive Board** for advice on specific matters. The strategic sustainability will be ensured by the **Forum Assembly** which will act as the ultimate decision-making body. Our suggested governance model is schematised in the image below:

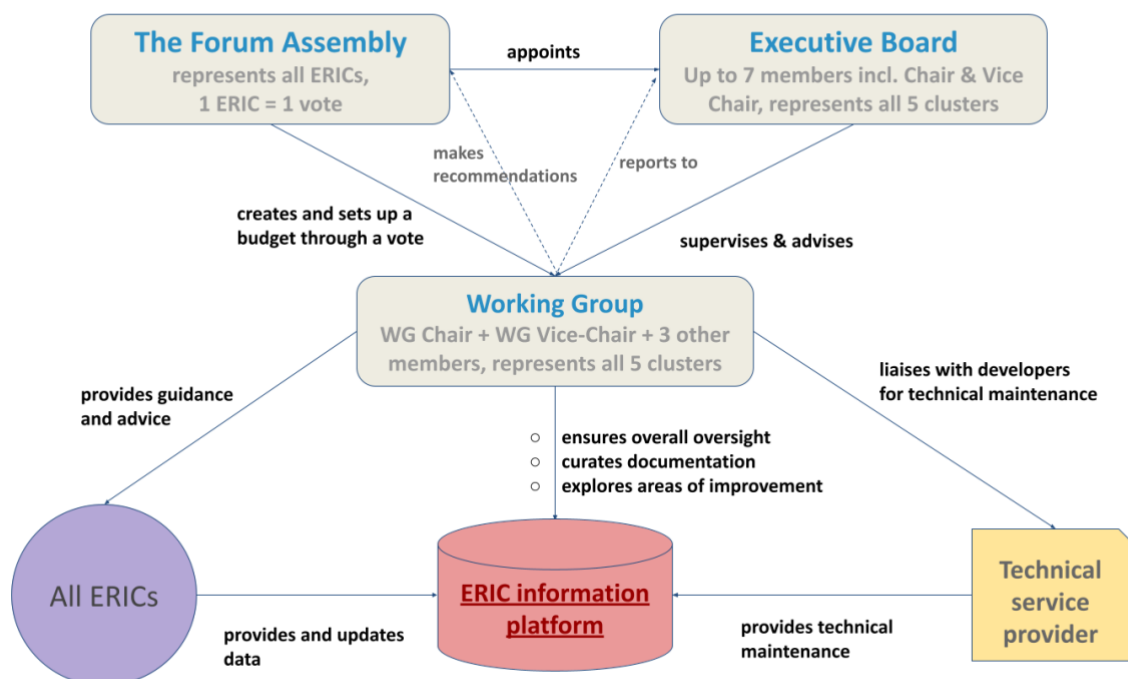


Fig. 3: Governance model

More specifically the governing bodies will have the following roles:

- **The Forum Assembly** will be responsible for setting up the Working Group dedicated to the ERIC platform and introducing a budget for its activities and technical maintenance. The Forum Assembly will act as the ultimate decision-making body for all platform-related matters and determine the platform's strategic orientation and policies on scientific, technical, and managerial matters. The Working Group will provide regular reports on the platform's operation. It will also suggest further improvement.
- The **Working Group** will be composed of a Chair, a Vice-Chair and one member from each Cluster not represented by the Chair and the Vice-Chair. At least one of the members should have solid technical expertise. This format will ensure that all ERICs are represented according to their science domains. Working Group members will be volunteers, appointed by the Forum Assembly for renewable terms of two years. The Working Group will be composed of 5 members and take decisions based on consensus. If a consensus is not reached, then a voting system is required, and a fair and well-balanced process should be ensured. The Working Group will be responsible for the general management of the ERIC platform and more specifically will be responsible for:

- ensuring the day-to-day technical operations of the ERICs platform;
  - exploring areas for improvement and technical needs, proposing cost-effective scenarios and recommendations to the Forum Assembly;
  - providing guidance and advice to ERICs;
  - curating documentation related to the platform, both from a technical and organisational point of view;
  - ensuring data quality and transparency;
  - liaising with developers and third-party providers for technical maintenance.
- The **Forum Executive Board** will act as an advisory board for the Working Group. The Executive Board oversees the daily management of the ERIC Forum and the implementation of the activities approved by the Forum Assembly. It provides recommendations and expertise to the Working Group dedicated to the ERICs platform.
  - **ERICs** are the ultimate instances for populating and regularly updating data in the platform. Each ERIC will appoint at least two contact persons for receiving reminders about the mandatory updates. ERICs will receive support, documentation and guidance from the Working Group.

The proposed governance model shall require agreement and approval from the ERIC Forum instances, following the procedures described in the Rules of Procedures. In a nutshell, once the deliverable is published, representatives of the Pillar 1 will consult the Forum Executive Board, presenting their recommendations to set up a Working Group. This will be discussed with the wider audience of the Forum Assembly, likely during one of the regular Annual Meetings. A vote will be cast to create the Working Group. It is to be noted that the governance model might be subject to modifications as the ERIC Forum Project 2 and the discussion with the ERIC Forum bodies unfolds.

We would like to underline here that **setting up a governance structure that has its roots in the current ERIC Forum governance model and equipping it with the necessary financial and human resources** is, in our opinion, absolutely essential to ensure effective and qualitative data curation as well as guarantee the long-term viability of the platform.

#### 4.2. Sustaining the platform

Data governance is key to the smooth running of the platform; however, we should not forget that data is intrinsically intertwined with the underlying technical infrastructure and that the latter needs to be maintained after the end of the project. If voluntary work carried out by the ERICs might be sufficient to perform the tasks of the Working Group, the technical maintenance of the platform, which will probably be outsourced to a company (eventually the one which will develop the platform during the ERIC Forum

2 if their performance is satisfactory), will require an actual budget. Our reflection towards a sustainability plan for the platform led us to consider two scenarios:

- **Scenario 1** includes the strictly necessary activities and funding needed to maintain the services after the end of the ERIC Forum 2 project. This may be the case if no follow-up projects are foreseen, there is a long transition period between one funded project and another, or there is no room for funding activities related to the platform in one of these projects. In this scenario, a minimal budget is ensured to cover operational costs (hardware, technical maintenance, constant operation of the service on a daily basis and the refactoring and new developments that will be needed).
- **Scenario 2** applies if follow-up ERIC Forum projects are funded by the European Commission through the Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development, such as Horizon Europe. While the governance model could remain unchanged, targeted actions could be planned to apply significant updates to the platform, actively involve ERICs with hands-on sessions, perform maintenance activities (both from the backend and frontend, bug fixing, security updates, refactoring) and include new visualisation or filtering features and new data types.

These two scenarios do not exclude one another but can be seen as complementary according to circumstances. At the time of writing, it is complicated to reflect on cost estimations for sustaining the platform from a technical point of view. The Request for Proposals (RFP) for the *Development of ERIC Forum knowledge Sharing and Reporting Platform*<sup>16</sup> was launched on 20 January 2025 and the technical development of the platform will be outsourced after the publication of this deliverable. Therefore, cost estimations will be refined after discussions with the selected service provider. Nevertheless, we could try to list the nature of the costs that we expect the platform generates:

- **Operational:** costs for hosting the platform, hardware, technical maintenance, constant operation of the service on a daily basis and the refactoring and new developments that will be needed in the future
- **Curation:** costs for curating the content, providing guidance and documentation
- **Governance:** costs necessary for running the Working Group

While the costs for **curation** and **governance** could be covered by in-kind contributions from the ERICs participating in the Working Group, we recommend that the Forum Assembly asks for an **annual fee** to be covered by each ERIC, with the aim of establishing a common pot which should be solely used with the aim of ensuring technical operations, developing of new features and performing upgrades, if these are required. The Forum Assembly being the only governing bodies able to set up a budget upon

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.icos-cp.eu/news-and-events/events/ef2-request-for-proposal> (last accessed on 27 January 2025).

unanimous vote, this matter should be discussed and voted on among all ERICs. They should decide on the amount but also on practicalities such as collecting the contributions or paying the invoices. With 30 active ERICs, even a relatively small fee could ensure platform operations in the long-term. The budget can be adjusted to reflect actual technical maintenance costs. Providing the platform with a financial

budget to guarantee the maintenance of the technical infrastructure is the cornerstone of its sustainability in the long term. In the table below we provide a hypothetical funding model:

Operational technical costs (per year) in scenario 1	
Maintenance backend (Bug fixing and/or security updates)	12,000€
Ingestion: aggregation pipeline	
Maintenance frontend	
Hosting	
Regular refactoring	
Funding (per year)	
500 € fee per established ERIC (30)	15,000€

In this scenario, we expect that maintaining the platform would cost 12,000€, which would be covered by an annual fee provided by the 30 ERICs à 500€ per ERIC, i.e. 15,000€. The remaining 3,000€ can be saved in case critical updates or new developments are suddenly needed. A maximum saving threshold can be set up by the Forum Assembly and when reaching it, fees would be temporarily suspended and the savings used to pay the regular operational technical costs. This model would ensure a higher responsiveness for covering foreseen and unforeseen fixes and upgrades.

An alternative option would be to not provide the platform with a regular budget, but instead the Forum Assembly shall ask Members to provide financial resources when needed on a one-off basis. This could relieve ERICs from paying an annual contribution, but this process would be less responsive to counteract unexpected technical issues.

At the time of writing this document, it remains complicated to provide a realistic estimation of the platform yearly technical costs without knowing which external provider will be responsible for its actual development. However, the Milestone 3 of the ERIC Forum 2 project (“The contract for building the platform is awarded”) will very soon be completed (planned at M18) and costs will be refined as the project progresses.

### 4.3. Creating adequate documentation

A robust data governance framework includes policies, procedures, and guidelines. To ensure maximum independence and sustainability of the information update process and to simplify information access for stakeholders, clear and extensive documentation should be developed and curated. This is a pivotal aspect of the overall sustainability, because it creates the conditions for optimal usage and mutual understanding. Therefore, we aim to develop the following documentation in parallel with the platform’s development as part of the WP2 and WP3:

- A Reporting Guide for ERICs personnel who will be responsible for filling out the platform
- A Technical Guide that will be made available to the IT teams of each ERIC
- A Data Governance guide that will describe data policies and standards as well as data lifecycle management

#### 4.3.1. The Reporting Guide

The purpose of the Reporting Guide is to provide a comprehensive document for ERIC personnel that describes and illustrates, step by step, how to fill in all the data fields: what data to provide, how to explain it if needed. More generally the document will also address the data curation in general, covering best practices and giving examples. A possible example could be the guide developed for the ESFRI Monitoring System.<sup>17</sup> The Reporting Guide will cover the following topics:

Values and Principles	Presentation of the values to follow (transparency, accuracy, etc.) criteria and principles surrounding the data collection
User Account Management	Instructions for creating an account and logging into the platform Detailed steps for modifying account details or changing passwords
ERIC Profile	Instructions for completing all the data fields related to an ERIC with explanation and illustration
Transparency Section	Instructions for completing sections where further data description and context is needed to ensure transparency

<sup>17</sup> <https://mos.esfri.eu/files/MoSUserGuide.pdf> (last accessed on 27 February 2025).

#### 4.3.2. The Technical Guide

This guide is primarily intended for people who will be working on the platform's technical infrastructure. The Technical Guide should provide a concise overview of the ERIC platform architecture, infrastructure, and operational procedures. It should detail system requirements, installation instructions, and configuration settings. The guide should also cover API specifications, data integration methods, and troubleshooting procedures, enabling developers and administrators to effectively interact with and maintain the platform. Security protocols, and backup/recovery procedures are crucial for ensuring system stability and data integrity. Finally, it should include a glossary of technical terms and version control information, facilitating clear communication and ongoing maintenance. The set up of such technical documentation will be done by the external service provider, in parallel with the platform development and under supervision of participants of WP2.

#### 4.3.3. The Data Governance Guide

Mostly useful for the members of the Working Group on governance but not only, a comprehensive data governance guide should meticulously outline roles and responsibilities of all actors involved in the ERIC platform, establishing clear ownership and accountability for data management. Key to the guide are detailed data policies and standards, addressing aspects like quality, security, privacy, and usage. Furthermore, the guide should describe the data lifecycle management process, from creation to deletion, and address compliance with relevant regulations and security protocols. Procedures for maintaining data quality, including accuracy and consistency, are essential. The guide must also define access and sharing policies, specifying who can access what data and under which conditions. Finally, it should include incident response procedures for data breaches or quality issues. It will be the responsibility of the Working Group to update the guide once the project is completed.

## 5. Conclusion

This document is to be considered as a first step to support strategic decisions in the upcoming project phase of developing the ERIC information platform. Our primary objective has been to provide a set of practical recommendations for the data collection, curation, and governance.

The success of the platform lies on an active participation and efficient collaboration of all ERICs. The establishment of a well-structured governance model, characterized by clear roles and responsibilities, is essential for the platform's long-term viability. Furthermore, it is crucial that this model is supported by the necessary resources to ensure the platform's continued operation beyond the ERIC Forum 2 project.

In our view, it is necessary to set up a governance model that has a light but efficient structure, with clear roles and competencies and that is ideally provided with resources needed to maintain the platform after the end of the ERIC Forum 2 project. It shall be noted that deliverables 3.1 *“User guideline”* for the platform and 3.2 *“Sustainability plan for reporting platform”*, both to be submitted at M48, will finalise these aspects related to governance and long-term sustainability.

We acknowledge that the regular updating of data, as recommended in this document, will require a significant commitment from ERICs. However, we also believe that an information platform on ERICs providing accurate and up-to-date data is a unique opportunity to increase ERICs' visibility and demonstrate their role in supporting ground-breaking research and innovation. Building a common approach toward data collection, curation and governance across 30 ERICs requires continuous consultations that we have initiated in the WP1 and which will continue over the coming months and years for the duration of the project.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) – to find a suitable contractor to develop the platform – was issued in January 2025 and we anticipate awarding the contract to the selected service provider by M19 of the project. As the platform's development progresses, this document will serve as a guide and we will continue to adapt it based on feedback from the ERIC Forum and the developers.



## Annex 1 - Data that will be displayed in the platform

#	Main category	Sub-category	Data	Description	Data characteristic	Data Plurality	Data source
1	<u>Organisation</u>	<b>ERIC identity</b>	ERIC acronym		text	Unique	ERIC Landscape (ERIC Forum), ESFRI MoS
2			ERIC full name		text	Unique	ERIC Landscape (EU Commission), ESFRI MoS
3			ERIC logo		image	Unique	ERIC Landscape (ERIC Forum), ESFRI MoS
4			Establishment date		date	Unique	ERIC Landscape (ERIC Forum), ESFRI MoS
5			Type of infrastructure	single sited / distributed	text	Unique	ESFRI MoS
6			Access type	physical / remote / digital	text	Multiple	ESFRI MoS
7			Research domain	thematic clusters	text	Multiple	ERIC Landscape (ERIC Forum), ESFRI MoS
8			Description of the ERIC	description of the activities, mission, vision.	text	Unique	ERIC Landscape (ERIC Forum) for the short version, ESFRI MoS for the long version
9		<b>Contact details</b>	Localisation head office	full address (extra info, street, street number, zip code, city, country)	text	Unique	ERIC Landscape (ERIC Forum), Individual ERICs websites
10			Contact email		email	Multiple	ERICs websites
11			Contact phone number		number	Multiple	ERICs websites
12	<u>Admin &amp; Legal</u>		Commission implementing decision	extract of the Official Journal of the European Union	link	Unique	ERIC Landscape (ERIC Forum), ERIC Landscape (EU Commission)

13			Statutes	last version of the statutes	PDF	Multiple	Individual ERICs websites
14			Internal Rules of Procedure	last version of the IRP	PDF	Multiple	Individual ERICs websites
15			Gender Equality Plan	last approved version of the GEP	PDF	Multiple	Individual ERICs websites, ERIC Forum website
16	<u>Outreach</u>		Website		link	Unique	ERIC Landscape (ERIC Forum), ERIC Landscape (EU Commission), ESFRI MoS
17			Social Media (e.g. X, LinkedIn, Facebook...)		link	Multiple	Individual ERICs websites
18			Annual Report		PDF	Multiple	Individual ERICs websites, ERIC Forum website
19	<u>Members</u>		Name of country/entity		text	Unique	ESFRI MoS, ERIC Landscape (ERIC Forum)
20			Type of membership	member / observer	text	Unique	ESFRI MoS
21			National Representative Entity	name of the ministry/funding agency representing the member	text	Unique	ESFRI MoS
22	<u>National consortia</u>		Name of the institution		text	Unique	ESFRI MoS
23			Country of the institution		text	Unique	ESFRI MoS
24			Statute of the institution	coordinator / participant	text	Unique	ESFRI MoS

25	<u>Financial information</u>	<b>Cash contribution</b>	Name of country/entity		text	Unique	Individual ERICs websites <sup>18</sup>
26			Year		date	Unique	Individual ERICs websites
27			Amount		value (€)	Unique	Individual ERICs websites
28		<b>In-kind contribution</b>	Name of country/entity		text	Unique	Individual ERICs websites
29			Year		date	Unique	Individual ERICs websites
30			Amount		value (€)	Unique	Individual ERICs websites
31		<b>Total revenue</b>	Budget/Value of the infrastructure		value (€)	Unique	Individual ERICs websites
32		<b>Total expenses</b>	Personnel expenses		value (€)	Unique	Individual ERICs websites
33			Operation expenses		value (€)	Unique	Individual ERICs websites
34			Investment		value (€)	Unique	Individual ERICs websites
35	<u>Services</u>		Name flagship ERICs service <i>n</i> <sup>19</sup>		text <sup>20</sup>	Unique	ESFRI MoS, ESFRI websites

<sup>18</sup> Financial information can be found, in most cases, in the Annual Reports, which can be found in individual ERICs websites.

<sup>19</sup> Each ERIC can individually choose the number of service it wants to highlight

<sup>20</sup> The ESFRI MoS requires ERICs to add information concerning services offered as part of a questionnaire. Data about flagship services can be found in the “resources hub” section of the European Open Science Cloud - EU Node website. As the EOSC Portal has been recently dismissed and EOSC EU Node has not been launched at the time of writing, it was decided to not include EOSC in the list of existing sources of information. However, we will closely follow future developments and analyse if EOSC Node could be used as a data source for the platform.

36			Description flagship ERICs service <i>n</i>		tex	Unique	ESFRI MoS, ESFRI websites
37			Website flagship ERICs service <i>n</i>		link	Unique	ESFRI MoS, ESFRI websites
38	<u>KPIs</u>		Name KPI <i>n</i>		text	Unique	Individual ERICs websites
39			Description KPI <i>n</i>		text	Unique	Individual ERICs websites
40			Year KPI <i>n</i>		Number (year)	Multiple	Individual ERICs websites
41			Value KPI <i>n</i>		Number + Unit	Multiple	Individual ERICs websites
42	<u>EU projects</u>		Projects	project details (acronym, abstract, number, duration...)	text	Multiple	CORDIS, Horizon Dashboard, OpenAIRE
43			Net EU Contribution	funding received by the EU	text	Unique	Horizon Dashboard
44			Number of signed grants		text	Unique	CORDIS, Horizon Dashboard
45			Project status	ongoing / closed	text	Unique	CORDIS, Horizon Dashboard
46			Collaboration Network	collaboration links in the projects	tabular	Unique	Horizon Dashboard
47	<u>Publications</u>		Publications	list of scientific publications related to ERICs	link	Unique	OpenAIRE (Zenodo)

## Annex 2 - Information required for the Transparency Register

Heading #	Requested information	Description
1	Applicant/registrant: organisation or self-employed individual	Enter the name of the organisation (or self-employed individual) and provide the legal status.
2	Contact details	Provide the contact details of the head office and, where appropriate, the office in charge of relations with the EU.
3	Person with legal responsibility	The person legally responsible is an individual who is allowed by law to act on behalf of the organisation or to represent it in contacts with public authorities.
4	Person in charge of EU relations	The person in charge of relations with the EU institutions is an individual who is responsible for the organisation's public affairs or contacts with the institutions.
5	Contact person	The contact person receives a validation email after the Secretariat has validated the registration and he is the main point of contact for the Secretariat for all questions about the register.
6	Persons with access to the registration	The system automatically grants access rights to the person who completes the application form, the person with legal responsibility, the person in charge of EU relations, the contact person. Additional contacts can be added.

7	Goals/remit	A brief description of the general mission, objectives and remit.
8	Interests represented	Choose between the options corresponding to the different types of interest representation: 1. Promoting your own interests or the collective interests of your members; 2. Advancing the interests of your clients (intermediary) 3. Not representing commercial interests
9	Specific activities covered by the register	Enter the information that indicates the reason why the organisation is registering and describe the activities that might influence for example EU policies or legislative proposals (e.g. main EU legislative proposals or policies targeted, communication activities in relation to EU policies, participation in other EU supported forums and platforms etc.).
10	Number of people involved in activities described under heading 9	Give the most up-to-date figure for the number of individuals carrying out activities covered by the register (this should be expressed in FTEs <sup>21</sup> ).
11	Fields of interest	Subscribe to automatic email notifications on Public Consultations and Roadmaps covering the selected fields of interest.
12	Membership and affiliation	Give details on membership in any entity or structure, own members and other affiliated entities.

<sup>21</sup> Full Time Equivalents.

13	Category of registration	Select a category that fits the objectives, mission, structure, activities and legal personality of the organisation.
14	Financial data: all applicants/registrants	Add information on the most recent 'financial year' closed, EU Grants and public procurement contracts. Depending on the interests represented (heading 8) different financial information is required.