OFFERR

Terms of reference

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2. Glossary

OFFERR: refers to a project funded by the European Commission under the Horizon Europe/ Euratom programme. OFFERR acronym stands for eurOpean platForm For accEssing nucleaR R&d facilities.

Infrastructure Projects: are selected projects to take place in the framework of OFFERR.

Users: are project partners (members and non-members of the OFFERR consortium) who will use a research infrastructure provided within the framework of the OFFERR project after a successful evaluation/selection.

Infrastructure Provider: is a project partner who is the owner/operator/authorized to administer the infrastructure listed in the European User Facility Network – EUFN. Infrastructure Providers can be members of the OFFERR consortium as well as external third parties.

Project Leader: one of the project partners (either the User or the Infrastructure Provider) who submits the application, signs the sub-awardee agreement with the OFFERR coordinator, receives funding for the project and distributes the money to the other project partners.

3. Introduction

The objective of the OFFERR project is to facilitate and promote access to key nuclear research infrastructures that provide essential and unique services to the European R&D community.

Research teams (from academia, research centers or industrial laboratories) will be provided support to access state-of-the-art nuclear research infrastructure and technical expertise from experienced scientists and engineers of the infrastructure. The OFFERR Interactive Forum will facilitate exchanges between the researchers and the Infrastructure Providers and potentially contribute to merging applications with similar objectives.

The OFFERR project will also support complementarity between the infrastructure access and EC mobility grants (coordination with the project proposal ENEN++). A submitted proposal may request funding for the use of one or more infrastructures.

The following activities that will contribute to the realization of the approved experiments are eligible:

- the costs that the User must pay to the Infrastructure Provider for the use of the infrastructure (e.g., training necessary for the access to the infrastructure; irradiation, post-irradiation examination, depreciation costs related to the use of the infrastructure for the project);
- consumables directly related to the experiment (e.g., purchase of sample, target, detector, electronics and other supporting material, their transport and preparation);
- travel and subsistence of the visiting researchers to the infrastructure to perform the preparation and experiment (tickets for transport – actual costs up to 500 €; accommodation and meals – fixed 150 EUR per day).

OFFERR does not cover the salary costs of the Users.

Two categories of applications are defined:

- **Fast-track project**: is a project to perform studies of limited scope which are to be completed in less than half a year (6 months) of access to the infrastructure. This type of project can be awarded a financial support of up to 50 kEUR.

- **Complex project:** is a project to perform studies with extended scope to be completed in less than a year and a half (18 months). This type of project can be allocated a financial support of up to 1 MEUR.

4. Funding and Implementation of Infrastructure Projects

The OFFERR project intends to facilitate access to infrastructures in the field of research in the nuclear fission technology in alignment with the strategic research and innovation agenda of SNETP. The goal is to establish a fund matching process for scientific projects for which a specific research infrastructure is required.
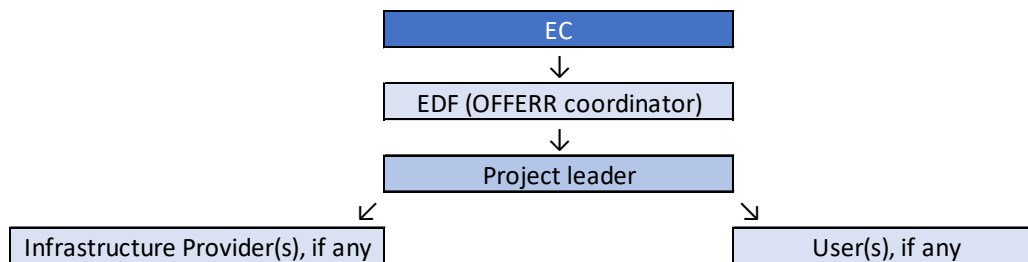
4.1. Funding

If and to the extent that a User uses the infrastructure of an Infrastructure Provider, the User must agree with the Infrastructure Provider (in the form of a bilateral agreement) on the eligible costs to be declared in the application to the OFFERR project.

Costs of the Infrastructure Provider: In principle, it is intended that the participation of the Infrastructure Provider in the Infrastructure Project is limited to the provision of the infrastructure. If and to the extent that, in deviation from this, further participation of the Infrastructure Provider is foreseen within the scope of the Infrastructure Project, the financial flow depends on the type of collaboration.

In all cases, the application for an Infrastructure Project shall contain sufficient and tangible information about the costs. These costs (type, amount, …) shall be clearly defined and agreed upon (copy of the agreement signed by all involved parties is thus mandatory). The EU-project, as facilitator, does not interfere in the negotiation between Users and Infrastructure Providers, but will assess the scientific and technical feasibility/excellence/etc. according to the evaluation criteria described in the accompanied document. Upon selection, the OFFERR project will clearly indicate the precise amount of the sponsoring to be provided to the selected Infrastructure Project and the terms of eligibility of each item.

The cascade funding in OFFERR is done according to the following scheme:

If the sum of all the OFFERR funded projects of a project partner who is a third party exceeds 299.999 €, an amendment to the Grant Agreement will be requested, whereby the partner in question will be included in the Grant Agreement as a Beneficiary. For project partners who are already beneficiaries and receive more than 299.999 €, an amendment of the Grant Agreement will be requested for every new project. Every partner who is included in an amendment to the Grant Agreement, has to report its costs to the EC portal considering a maximum of 25% overheads. The options for the project partners are summarized in the following table.

Option #	1	2	3	4
Project partner is	Third party	Third party	Beneficiary	Beneficiary
Total budget received from OFFERR	< 300k EUR	> 300k EUR	< 300k EUR	> 300k EUR
Project partner status	Remains third party	Becomes beneficiary	Remains beneficiary	Remains beneficiary
GA amendment for every project	No	Yes	No	Yes
Reporting to EC Portal	No	Yes	No	Yes
Limit on overheads	Actual costs	25%	Actual costs	25%

4.2.   Call for proposals

The above-mentioned funding for Users (financial support to third parties) will be announced in several rounds of calls for proposals, each in an open call for the general public. Potential Users who are not party to this Consortium Agreement can apply with concretely formulated project ideas (project description and costs). The eligible costs and activities will be developed by the parties as part of the work description within their proposal for an Infrastructure project and will be considered in the evaluation and selection of each proposal by independent peer reviewers. These Infrastructure Projects as well as the subsequent results and their use must be for peaceful purposes (no military use).

The Users must not be companies within the meaning of state aid law.

4.3.   Network of existing research infrastructure (facilities)

The call for proposals refers to the European User Facility Network (EUFN), which is a catalogue of all nuclear research infrastructures eligible in OFFERR. This also shows the potential of the infrastructure, i.e. what potential work could be done there and what it is used for. The operator of the respective infrastructure (Infrastructure Provider) can already deposit general terms of use and specifications for potential Infrastructure Projects in this publication. The potential User must contact the desired Infrastructure Provider(s) before participating in a call, in order to coordinate the desired content and scope of the targeted Infrastructure Project.

Within the OFFERR project, an interactive Forum will be set-up that facilitates exchanges and dialogue between researchers and the infrastructures owners/operators, and that will potentially contribute to merge project ideas/applications that have similar/complementary objectives.

4.4.   Selection of potential Infrastructure Projects

The selection of the Infrastructure Projects to be funded is based on objective, non-discriminatory criteria that are defined in the document "OFFERR-evaluation-criteria". On the basis of these selection criteria, external independent reviewers will decide which applicant should be considered for funding.

If an applicant is selected for funding, the coordinator, mandated by the general assembly of the OFFERR consortium, will forward the funding to the successful "Infrastructure project" according to the rules and regulations set by the European commission and the grant agreement. The successful applicant is obliged to comply with the regulations of the Grant Agreement and if deemed necessary with the Consortium Agreement (see article 1.1.6).

The forwarding of funds and the effectiveness of the Infrastructure project are subject to the condition that the selected applicant concludes an Infrastructure Agreement with the Infrastructure Provider.

The selected applicants become third parties of the coordinator in the sense of Article 9.4 of the Grant Agreement.

The topical orientations of the expected applications are grouped in seven call areas (as described below). These areas and their description may be changed by OFFERR during the lifetime of OFFERR. Information will be provided in OFFERR webpage. Considerations will be taken as to the fact that the proposals shall take into consideration the on-going projects within EURATOM programme.

1) Light Water Reactor sustainability

This call area is dedicated to LWR materials ageing and degradation (long term operation), technologies to mitigate ageing mechanisms (e.g. additive manufacturing), technologies to enhance safety and operational efficiency of existing nuclear power plants including plant lifetime management and lifetime extension for LWRs.

2) Advanced fission reactor concepts

This call area is dedicated to innovative concepts (like Small Modular Reactors, Gen-IV reactors, Accelerator-Driven Systems), technologies to enhance safety, proliferation resistance, operational efficiency, safeguards and security posture of advanced nuclear reactor designs and fuel cycle technologies currently under development in the European Union and according to SNETP-pillar's vision.

3) Waste and decommissioning

This call area is dedicated to advanced waste forms characterization and management, waste repositories and storage facilities, technologies for safer, cheaper, and faster dismantling and decommissioning of nuclear power plants and research reactors to complement the activities undergoing within EURAD partnership and PREDIS or any other on-going Euratom project.

4) Nuclear science applications

This call area is dedicated to nuclear science applications and improvements in core nuclear physics, nuclear data, and validation of simulation tools.

5) Advanced nuclear fuels

This call area is dedicated to innovative manufacturing and fabrication techniques, accident-tolerant fuels, claddings, and materials, high burn-up and enrichment as well as pre-disposal management of spent fuel.

6) Innovation in nuclear instrumentation

This call area is dedicated to developing advanced sensors and instruments for accurate, high-resolution measurements as well as advanced control systems to enable near real-time control of NPP or experimentation process variables.

7) Radioprotection and nuclear medicine

This call area is dedicated to developing advanced technologies and instruments for radioprotection and nuclear medicine as complement to PIANOFORTE partnership.

4.5.   Infrastructure Agreement

In parallel to the regulation of the forwarding of funds, the selected applicant and the selected Infrastructure Provider must agree on a potential cooperation in the form of an Infrastructure Agreement. The Infrastructure Provider is entitled to demand adjustments to the project description, in particular to comply with its legal and internal regulations. However, it may also refuse cooperation, in particular if the content of the project or cooperation with a specific selected applicant would not comply with the legal, political or ethical principles of the Infrastructure Provider, if conflicts of interest would arise or if there is simply not enough free capacity available.

The agreement between the users and the infrastructure provider must include an Intellectual Property (IP) section (may be waived in case of a fast-track project) that determine the property of the results and follows European Commission policy: application projects must be as open as possible and as closed as necessary.