



**European Holocaust Research Infrastructure
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Deliverable 2.2

Model with rules for calculating and valuing in-kind contributions

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Abstract (for dissemination)	<p>This deliverable presents the next steps in the development of EHRI-ERIC's strategy around in-kind contributions (IKC). This includes an updated definition and typology (in comparison to the output of the Preparatory Phase project), a clear overview of the involvement of different layers of the EHRI-ERIC organisation and a process for managing IKCs. Lastly, the document demonstrates which areas of work still require attention for the model to become operational. Decisions in this document are based on, on one hand, a thorough desktop study of the RI landscape which explored the best practices already developed by others in the wider RI landscape and, on the other, a conscious deliberation of what would work best in the context of EHRI-ERIC. A continual dialogue with the National Nodes ensured that consensus building was embedded in the process of development.</p>

Abbreviations used in this document:

Central Hub	=	CH
General Assembly	=	GA
In-kind contribution	=	IKC
National Coordinators Committee	=	NCC
National Node	=	NN
Research Infrastructure	=	RI

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1 Introduction

This deliverable presents the system the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) will use to manage, administer and monitor in-kind contributions (IKCs) that are provided to the ERIC. This tailored approach ensures that, first, the concept of IKCs takes root in the planning of all types of contributions made by NNs that address EHRI's core missions; second, that these actions find their way into the accounting books in a quantified (i.e. in monetary terms) format; and, third, that the sum of these contributions is added to both the actual as well as the perceived overall value EHRI-ERIC represents. By design, the system itself should ensure that value is added to the ERIC by being supportive of real-world work activities, which should outweigh the cost of the associated additional overhead.

The development of this system fits the wider agenda that underpins the EHRI Implementation Phase (EHRI-IP) project work plan. During this project, the consortium operationalises the plans established during the EHRI Preparatory Phase (EHRI-PP) project, advancing the maturity and capabilities of the organisation to ensure a smooth transition into the implementation and early operation phase. This closely aligns with the work that has been conducted under T2.2, where this system for the administration of IKCs was developed.

This deliverable is structured as follows. After this introduction, it presents the most recent definition of IKCs in section 2. Section 3 provides a brief overview of how the concept of IKCs has taken shape across various projects, from 2010 until now. The following sections provide more information on the nature and management of IKCs where the typology contains a more granular overview of IKCs that aligns closely with EHRI's working practice (section 4); the governance section outlines the involvement of each level of EHRI-ERIC's organisation in their development (section 5); and the process section provides a general overview of how IKCs are managed (section 6). Lastly, section 7 outlines which steps still need to be taken until EHRI-ERIC's IKC strategy can become operational.

2 Definition

During the EHRI-IP project, T2.2 explored how other RIs define IKCs. Virtually all research infrastructures surveyed mention a transfer of value which is non-cash. Building on the work done during the EHRI-PP project, we found that the definition (with a clear demarcation) that we encountered during EHRI-PP is still relevant: **"The provision of (...) goods, use of services and facilities, professional services or expertise in the form of staff time, provision of or access to equipment (...)"**¹ This definition, which can be traced back all the way to the CoPoRI project (Communication and Policy development for Research Infrastructures in Europe, 2013), is applied widely by organisations such as the Memorial University of Newfoundland, The Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation and, more akin to EHRI, DARIAH ERIC.²

¹ Isabel Boliger, **InRoad Consultation Report: Prioritisation, Evaluation and Funding of Research Infrastructures in Europe**, 2017. See: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321671593_InRoad_Consultation_Report_Prioritisation_Evaluation_and_Funding_of_Research_Infrastructures_in_Europe (last consulted: 3 March 2025). NB: "special materials" is left out of the situation as we find it sufficiently covered under "goods".

² Memorial University of Newfoundland website, **Research Initiatives and Services, Research Project Management**. See: <https://research-tools.mun.ca/rpm/process/plan-project-execution/develop-a-project-budget/> (last consulted: 3 March 2025). No author, **CABHI Call for Innovations In-Kind Contributions & Matching**

Discussing the definition within the consortium, it became apparent that – more than the definition of IKC in and of itself – IKCs’ relation to other concepts needed clarifying. Most prominently, “services” emerged as a perceived, overlapping concept. This was due to the fact that many IKCs are expected to be provided in the form of services, such as the contribution of an EHRI Blog article or a podcast episode. The fundamental difference however, does not lie in *what* is offered, but more in *how* this offer takes shape. More simply stated, this means that (part of) a service can be contributed by a NN (as an IKC) to the ERIC without money changing hands.

Lastly, in the EHRI-PP project a set of three criteria was defined under which an IKC could be accepted by EHRI-ERIC. During the EHRI-IP project, these have not undergone any changes and are thus still relevant:

In-kind contributions to EHRI-ERIC:

- need to bring EHRI-ERIC closer to fulfilling its mission statement;
- have to correspond to specific, verifiable cost items;
- need to be subjected to the assessment process for IKCs³

3 IKCs in EHRI, a brief timeline

3.1 The first EHRI projects

The first time EHRI received IKCs was during its first three scientific projects. In EHRI-1 (2010-2015, funded by FP7 of the EU), EHRI-2 (2015-2019, funded by Horizon2020 of the EU) and EHRI-3 (2019-2025, funded by Horizon2020 of the EU), reporting the value of transnational access (TA) services was considered an IKC. The generous spirit across the consortium inspired partner organisations to go the extra mile for TA users (providing tours of institutes, brainstorming sessions with senior researchers etc.) without any form of monetary compensation. The actual value of the associated staff time (personnel costs), the costs of a desk in the reading room, etc. were never quantified. As it is not a hard requirement for projects, it was deemed too cumbersome to implement an official IKC policy. However, as the consortium members were aware of this, it proved to be a useful example to illustrate to partners what an IKC is.

Funds Guideline for CABHI Portion of Funds, 2017. See: <https://www.cabhi.com/wp-content/uploads/In-Kind-Contributions-Matching-Funds-Guideline-CABHI-pdf-final1.pdf> (last consulted: 3 March 2025), M. Raciti, Y. Moranville, R. Barthauer, S. Buddenbohm and D. Seillier, 2019. See https://hal.science/hal-02088278v1/file/DESIR_D5.4_Implementation%20of%20a%20centralized%20helpdesk%20and%20marketplace%20mockups_final.pdf (last consulted: 3 March 2025) .

³ F. Uiterwaal, L. Zessin-Jurek, K. Freise, et. al., **Deliverable 3.3, Financial Policies**, EHRI-PP Deliverable, February 2023, p.15.

EHRI projects (< 2025)

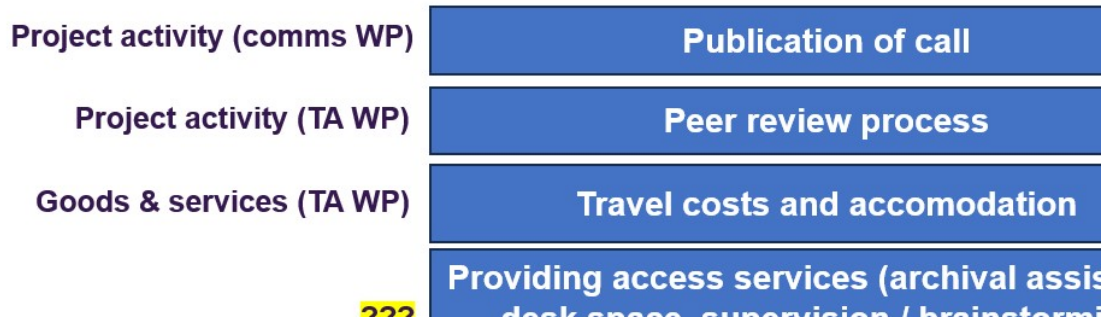


Figure 1: Sources of funding in each step in EHRI's transnational access programme, before and after the establishment of EHRI-ERIC

The figure above illustrates how IKCs have always been an integral part of EHRI, in this case, within (part of) an existing service (transnational access or TNA). As we can see, some services associated with TNA EHRI offered during its project phases were carried out as (non-formalised) IKCs and, therefore, can serve as a basis for how the current mode of operation can be adapted to a future one, notably by identifying non-material transfers of value as in the example above, quantifying them and administering them.

3.2 During EHRI-PP

EHRI's work on conceptualising IKCs started in earnest during the EHRI Preparatory Phase project (EHRI-PP) between 2019 and 2022. In this period, the consortium started to outline what IKCs mean in the context of EHRI and what a high-level process for administering IKCs could look like. The most important output of this project is a high-level definition of IKCs, based on the work of other RIs and, primarily, prior work that was done in the ACCELERATE project.⁴ It started reformulating these principles to suit EHRI's own scientific context, initiating the thinking process on what IKCs mean for the institutions that form the backbone of EHRI's distributed infrastructure, e.g. Holocaust archives, memorial centres and research facilities.

Moreover, the task considered what could be valid criteria for the inclusion of such contributions to EHRI's core infrastructure and how these could be categorised across a typology of IKCs.⁵ Lastly, the EHRI-PP consortium agreed on a high-level process for the administration of IKCs, which consisted of 5 phases: 1) a proposal phase (initiated by the NN) or request phase (initiated by the CH); 2) an assessment phase; 3) an operation phase; 4) an administrative phase; and 5) an evaluation phase.⁶ Consortium-wide consensus on these principles was reached through various online and in-person workshops, often coinciding with EHRI-PP General Partner Meetings.

⁴ C. Rizzuto, **In Kind Contributions in the life of an ERIC** (presentation ACCELERATE project), 2019. See: http://www.accelerate2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/20191205_IKC-Workshop-by-CERIC_CarloRIZZUTO.pdf (last consulted: 3 March 2025). Adapted to: F. Uiterwaal et. al., **Deliverable 3.3**, p.12.

⁵ F. Uiterwaal et. al., **Deliverable 3.3**, p.13-14.

⁶ F. Uiterwaal et. al., **Deliverable 3.3**, p.17.

3.3 During EHRI-IP

Building on EHRI-PP's outcomes, EHRI-IP has provided an ideal opportunity to translate (still relatively) high-level concepts into a concrete way of working, consisting of processes built on actionable steps.

By doing so, the aim has been to make the concepts on which the IKC strategy is built as recognisable and as applicable as possible. By closely analysing strategic whitepapers on the nature of IKCs and subsequently comparing the practices and processes other Research Infrastructures (RIs) have deployed to administer IKCs, we have elaborated how this type of value is accounted for within EHRI-ERIC. This outward-looking methodology proved successful in EHRI-PP, but something more is needed when building an operation-ready organisation during EHRI-IP. Therefore, on top of this core group internal desktop study, the task relied even more on translating concepts to EHRI-specific arrangements and on consensus building.

Here, T2.2 is indebted to WP3, which is built around the strengthening of NNs, as this work package organised a recurring series of workshops, the key objective of which has been to ensure that the CH and NNs are aligned, both in terms of management structures and scientific strategy. These workshops have provided a platform to increase the collective understanding on IKCs across the consortium, to build consensus on how these should be approached and to successfully exploit synergies between work done centrally and the ideas of the NNs that are front runners within the consortium. The topic of IKCs has featured three times in these WP3 meetings in a workshop format.

A brief overview of discussions on IKCs in these WP3 workshops is provided below.

#1. Monday 9 September 2024

The main aim of this first workshop was to get the consortium acquainted with the main concepts of IKCs and to invite active participation. The latter is especially important because the CH has very limited possibilities in identifying IKCs that are not pro-actively reported by NNs.



Figure 2: A slide from the presentation on why IKCs are important for the recognition of EHRI-ERIC

Other than conveying the importance of IKCs to NNs, the workshop involved a short brainstorming session on how the process of administering them can take a more concrete form.

#2. Thursday 16 January 2025

Using the input from the first workshop, the task group developed an updated process for the administration of IKCs. This process was discussed in depth in this second workshop (in this deliverable, section 6 is dedicated to this process). Furthermore, an attempt was made to gather an overview that gives an indication of the expected IKCs by NNs. This however, proved to be too early in the development of the NNs. Moreover, two additional necessities became apparent: 1) updating the typology so that it better reflects the services and activities as the EHRI consortium knows them, and 2) further detailing how the involvement of the different levels of the EHRI-ERIC organisation in IKCs is organised.

#3. Monday 17 February 2025

Having taken all suggestions on board, T2.2 worked on an updated typology and a governance model for IKCs. These were presented during the last workshop on IKCs and accepted by the consortium. In this deliverable, the governance is explained in section 5 and the updated typology in section 4.

After the workshops series

The EHRI-IP consortium decided to extend the conversations on IKCs beyond the duration of T2.2. After submitting this deliverable, the task group will continue to work on a smooth implementation, foreseen end of 2025/early 2026 in close dialogue with the NNs. The National Coordinators Committee (NCC) is deemed a suitable forum where the entire EHRI-ERIC network can remain actively informed and closely involved in the further development of the IKC policy.

4 Typology

A typology is a common way for RIs to categorise IKCs. This can be useful for monitoring purposes and for NNs to develop a strategy where they identify areas to contribute in.

A first typology was developed during EHRI-PP. The original list was largely similar to the fields below at top level (without yellow highlighting). During the EHRI-IP WP3 workshops described in the previous section, it became apparent that partner institutions were looking for more recognisable 'labels' to work with. This resulted in the list of recognised contributions as listed below (with yellow highlighting).

Another change was that where contributions were originally divided across services (a recurring contribution) and activities (a single contribution, made once), the consortium opted for removing this distinction as it added to the initial confusion around the difference between services and contributions and it did not add any particular value. Thus, the decision was made to only recognise one single category: "contributions".

Contributions:

- **Access provision;**
 - **Transnational Access services**
- **Data provision;**

- **Provision of collection descriptions**
- **Governance**
 - **Contributing to the NCC**
- **Resource / content creation;**
 - **Provision of an EHRI Document Blog article**
 - **Provision of an EHRI Edition article**
 - **Provision of a data set to the EHRI Geospatial Repository**
 - **Contribution to an EHRI Podcast episode**
 - **Other**
- **Event organisation;**
 - **Organisation of an EHRI workshop**
 - **Organisation of an EHRI seminar**
 - **Organisation of another EHRI event**
- **Dissemination and Outreach;**
 - **Dissemination and Outreach activities on behalf of the ERIC**
- **Technical development;**
 - **Development of a tool**
 - **Development of a website**
 - **Development of a data set**
- **Technical maintenance;**
 - **Maintenance of a tool**
 - **Maintenance of a website**
 - **Maintenance of a data set**
- **Proposal writing;**
 - **Contributing to the drafting of an EHRI-ERIC research proposal**
- **Knowledge provision**
 - **Consultancy**
 - **Monitoring of the scientific landscape**
 - **Participation in an EHRI Working Group**
 - **Contributing to a scientific publication**
 - **Representing EHRI at an external event**

5 Governance

5.1 ERIC governance and in-kind contributions

Given the importance of IKCs in the operation of ERICs, it is not surprising that many RI consortia include governance provisions concerning this type of contribution in their statutes

and in the rules of procedure that have been made publicly available. The provisions in the statutes that T2.2 encountered vary in detail, but most ERICs – 21 of the 30 ERICs⁷ that are currently operational (including EHRI-ERIC; see below) – address the bare minimum suggested in the *ERIC practical guidelines*: ‘The statutes should lay down the procedure for the assembly of members to decide on in-kind contributions and to include them in the ERIC budget.’⁸ In other words, the majority of ERIC statutes affirm that it is the assembly of members (or equivalent) as the highest governing body with full decision-making power that is ultimately responsible for ensuring that a consortium has a coherent and feasible policy when it comes to accepting and budgeting IKCs.

Given that IKCs are often included in financial plans, ERICs have a high threshold for accepting or changing rules that regulate them, but not restrictively so. Provisions outlining IKCs in the statutes are not deemed ‘essential elements’ as defined by the EC’s ERIC regulation and, therefore, do not require the EC’s permission to be amended.⁹ Motions aimed at changing IKC rules require fixed majorities ranging from two thirds to unanimous votes or qualified majorities.¹⁰

A handful of ERICs also specify in their statutes or rules of procedure that their respective assemblies of members may be assisted in their approach to IKCs by other governing bodies. However, there does not appear to be one single approach that is widely adopted across the ERIC landscape. For instance, EMSO’s statutes state that the values of IKCs agreed to by its assembly of members are based on recommendations from the Director-General.¹¹ Similarly, CERIC’s Executive Director plays a role in reviewing IKC proposals submitted to its General Assembly (GA), but CERIC’s director also consults the Board of Directors of Partner Facilities on this matter.¹² The statutes and internal rules of DARIAH, CTAO and European Spallation Source (ESS) outline even more complex IKC review procedures overseen by different governance bodies. According to DARIAH’s statutes, its Joint Research Committee (JRC) provides ongoing support to the Board of Directors in ‘compiling and assessing any in-kind contributions’.¹³ DARIAH’s rules further specify that its Senior Management Team and the JRC jointly review and approve IKCs. As for CTAO and ESS, they have set up bodies that deal solely with IKCs: IKC Review Committees. These committees are charged with evaluating in-kind proposals and making recommendations directly to CTAO’s and the ESS’s respective councils (their equivalent of an assembly of members).¹⁴

⁷ See the statutes of the following ERICs: ACTRIS, AnaEE, BBMRI, CERIC, CTAO, DARIAH, ECCSEL, ELI, EMBRC, EMSO, ESS, Euro-Argo, Euro-Biolmaging, EU-SOLARIS, European Spallation Source, LifeWatch, MIRRI, LOFAR and JIV.

⁸ *ERIC practical guidelines: Legal Framework for a European Infrastructure Consortium*, 2015, p. 17

⁹ European Commission, **Regulation (EC) No 723/2009 – rules for creating a European Research Infrastructure Consortium**, 2024, see: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=legissum:ri0005> (last consulted: 4 March 2025).

¹⁰ For examples of the different majorities required to pass motions concerning in-kind contributions, see CERIC, EMBRC and LOFAR.

¹¹ EMSO-ERIC, **Statutes of the European Multidisciplinary Seafloor and Water Column Observatory — European Research Infrastructure Consortium (EMSO ERIC)**, 2016, see: https://emso.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/New-Statutes-EMSO-ERIC_docx.pdf (last consulted: 4 March 2025).

¹² **Statutes of CERIC-ERIC**, 2014, see: <https://www.ceric-eric.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/STATUTES-OF-CERIC-ERIC-Consolidated-Version-16.01.2022.pdf> (last consulted: 4 March 2025). Article 14(4)(b). CERIC’s statutes also includes an article relating to the setting up of an Independent Audit Expert Committee by the General Assembly to audit purchases acquired for use as in-kind contributions. See Article 16.

¹³ **Statutes of CERIC-ERIC**, Article 15(5)(a).

¹⁴ **European Spallation Source ERIC**, ‘**ESS Governance Rules of Procedure / Terms of Reference: In-kind Contributions Review Committee**’, 2023, p. 18; **CTAO Statutes**, ‘**Annex B: Basic Principles for In-kind Contributions to CTAO ERIC**’, p. 25.

5.2 EHRI-ERIC governance and in-kind contributions

In many ways, EHRI-ERIC's governance provisions on IKCs reflect the general elements discussed above. EHRI-ERIC's GA is ultimately responsible for approving and amending the framework for IKCs. A unanimous vote is required to alter this framework as it is considered an integral part of the ERIC's financial model. It should be noted that this requirement includes a failsafe measure where, if a decision to change the financial model 'cannot be reached at two consecutive ballots at separate meetings, the decision shall be taken with three-quarter majority at a third ballot organised at a consecutive meeting'.¹⁵ EHRI-ERIC's Statutes also stipulate that the NCC is tasked with reporting the nature and value of IKCs in their respective nodes to the Director who, in turn, reports this information to the GA.¹⁶ No explicit mention of IKCs is made in the EHRI-ERIC Rules of Procedure.

In addition to the parameters already stipulated in EHRI-ERICs statutes, T2.2 discussed the role of the various layers of the organisation's governance, as well as their interrelations. This is presented in the following overview.

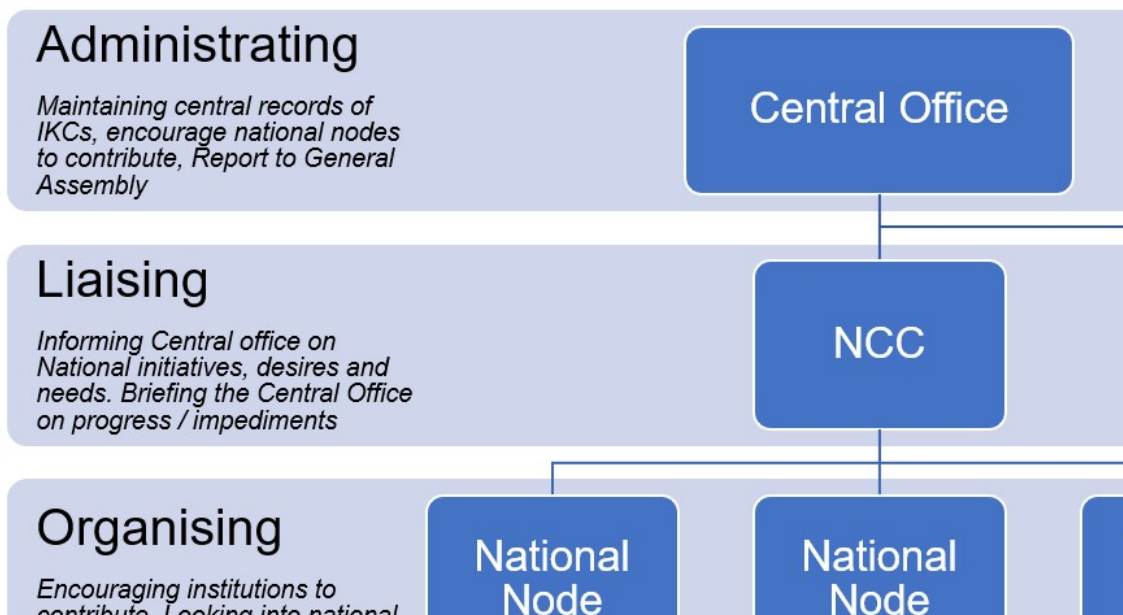


Figure 3: An overview of how the different layers of governance in EHRI that deal with IKCs are interconnected

In short, the Central Office's main responsibility is **administrating** IKCs. This involves both a strategic role, in which it provides direction, as well as a more organisational role. The latter involves the maintenance of administrative records of IKCs and reporting the overall status of this type of contribution to the GA. For the Central Office, the most important connection to the wider EHRI network is the NCC. This is why the role of this body is characterised as one of **liaising**. It informs the Central Office about what is happening at the national level and reports significant developments. Consisting of NN coordinators, the NCC is optimally positioned to communicate the needs of the wider EHRI network to the strategic level of the ERIC. National coordinators also lead the work that is carried out by and within the NNs, thus **organising** the work associated with this type of contribution. They oversee what

¹⁵ **EHRI-ERIC Statutes**, 2024, see: Article 20(7), see: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C_202500755 (last consulted 4 March 2025)

¹⁶ **EHRI-ERIC Statutes**, Article 22(4)(f) and Article 21(4)(f and g)

institutions in their countries can contribute and inspire them to do so. Lastly, the institutes form the operational layer, **executing** the work that is needed to ensure that IKCs contribute meaningfully to EHRI's activities.

6 Process

6.1 IKCs in other ERICs

In order to understand how IKC management works in other ERICs, T2.2 conducted a desktop study analysing the processing of this type of contribution in other RIs. This study included both RIs that are active in adjacent fields in the Social Sciences and Humanities, as well as other ERICs. The results of this inquiry show that the majority of ERICs do not provide detailed, publicly available documentation on their IKCs for sub-processes such as operation, submission, review and evaluation.

The following paragraphs focus primarily on documentation that was made available by DARIAH ERIC and the Horizon 2020 ACCELERATE project, which was coordinated by CERIC ERIC. This documentation outlines several approaches and methodologies in relation to IKCs and ERICs and has served as a starting point for thinking about EHRI-ERIC's own IKC policy.

The DARIAH research infrastructure has established a framework to collect, disseminate, and monitor contributions. The framework is built on a contributions concept and an online tool that distinguishes between continuing services and unique activities. The primary objectives of a solid IKC management system for DARIAH have been: ensuring the visibility of contributions to users, assessing compatibility with the existing infrastructure, and monitoring the diversity and maturity of contributions for strategic planning. The online tool allows contributors to self-assess their contributions using DARIAH-defined criteria, which are then peer-reviewed to establish compatibility tiers. Additionally, it generates real-time reports to track the contributions' diversity and effectiveness, guiding their ultimate integration into a broader DARIAH marketplace as an access point for end-users.¹⁷

The ACCELERATE project outlined a process comprising several steps. The first step involves identifying facilities that will be made available to the ERIC. These are also formalised through framework agreements between ERICs and designated NNs. The second step focuses on the identification and allocation of resources utilised by ERICs, detailing annual commitments in specific agreements with each NN. The third step involves the establishment of guidelines for the reporting of IKCs with several key criteria recommended (e.g. necessary to achieve the strategic goals of the ERIC; supported by appropriate documentation; and aligned with agreed administrative, scientific and/or technical activities). Furthermore, costs should ideally be reflected in an ERIC's budget and must adhere to applicable national laws and regulations regarding taxation, labour and social security. Additionally, costs must be reasonable and justified and comply with sound financial management principles. The IKCs may also be the subject of internal and/or external auditing. The fourth step involves defining practical tools for implementation, focusing on IKC evaluation and accounting strategy. This includes a comprehensive set of tools for data collection in a uniform format for efficient accounting (e.g. tables for collecting IKCs, guidelines for accurately completing these tables, representations of scientific

¹⁷ L. de Leeuw, F. Admiraal, M. Ďurčo, et al.. **D5.1 Report on Integrated Service! Needs: DARIAH (in kind) contributions - Concept and Procedures**, 2017, see: <https://pure.knaw.nl/portal/nl/publications/d51-report-on-integrated-service-needs-dariah-in-kind-contributio> (last consulted: 4 March 2025).

activities, timelines for IKC data submission forms to describe current and planned activities, and indicators to assess the impact of these activities).¹⁸

Two activities in the processing of IKCs deserve special attention: valuing IKCs and conducting a quality control review. More information on these two topics is provided below.

6.2 Valuation

Ensuring that IKCs to an ERIC are correctly valued is important as it helps all interested parties understand the specific and overall value of its activities. There are a number of ways to attribute an accurate or fair value to an IKC, but these may vary, depending on the type of contribution. For instance, in the case of supplies that are purchased to support an ERIC's activities, there should be invoices recording their value. The same applies to the provision of *standard* facilities, instruments or services, the values of which are also likely documented in invoices or contracts. In these two cases, where the direct costs are clearly specified, it is possible to value contributions based on their actual monetary value at the time of purchase. Alternatively, cost books can be drawn up in which fixed values are assigned to particular goods or services. These values are independent of the real cost incurred by the contributing entity. If no invoices exist for the provision of standard facilities, instruments or services, then a professional assessment process is required to calculate a fair market value. The question of calculating the value of an IKC becomes more difficult when a *specific* facility, instrument or service is offered to an ERIC. This is due to the fact that there is no pre-existing market on which to base an estimate. To overcome this issue, a common system of rules which serve to calculate the value of specific IKCs would need to be put in place.¹⁹

In practice, it appears that the methods operational ERICs use to assign a value to in-kind contributions – whether it is relatively easy to identify the value (i.e. there is invoice recording the value) or not – ultimately come down to sets of rules that have been approved by an ERIC's assembly of members.²⁰ For example, the value of IKCs DARIAH receives is either calculated based on the 'actual costs according to the accounting rules agreed upon by the members... [or] according to H2020 project accounting rules'.²¹ Other ERICs, including ELI, ESS and CTAO, explicitly mention cost books (approved by their members) in their statutes as a means to define the values of the in-kind contributions they receive.²²

6.3 Quality Review

In the documents produced by other ERICs, quality review processes are not always discussed in detail. Deliverable 1.8 of the ACCELERATE project refers to auditing as a possible way to review the quality of IKCs, but points to the issue of a contractual

¹⁸ A. Biljesko a.o., **D1.8 In-kind contribution Methodology (project deliverable from the ACCELERATE project)**, see: https://www.accelerate2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/ACCELERATE-D1.8_In-kind-Contribution-Methodology.pdf (last consulted: 4 March 2025).

¹⁹ A. Biljesko a.o., **D1.8 In-kind contribution Methodology**, p. 12-13.

²⁰ See the statutes of the following ERICs: AnaEE, CERIC, CTAO, DARIAH, EMBRC, EMSO, European Spallation Source, LifeWatch and MIRRI.

²¹ L. de Leeuw a.o. **D5.1 Report on Integrated Service!Needs**. p. 38.

²² See: **ERIC Annex 3: Basic Rules and Principles for In-kind Contributions of the Statutes of the European Spallation Source; Article 22(3)(a) and Article 25(10)(m) of the Statutes of ELI ERIC and Annex B Basic Principles for In-Kind Contributions to CTAO ERIC of the Statutes of CTAO ERIC.**

relationship as a condition to appoint an auditor. As a consequence, the appointment of any auditors should be arranged by the representing entities and not by the ERIC.²³

DARIAH has a more elaborate methodology to assess the quality of IKCs, which is based on formal criteria to be met and includes a process of self-assessment and peer review on one hand and guidelines for quality for the implementation of activities and services on the other hand.²⁴

A first element concerns the way IKCs are described. The description should be in a common language focussing on specific aspects in order to make comparison of the various IKCs proposed by the different partners possible. Comparing could potentially also be used for benchmarking, which may be one of the instruments for quality control. The second element is the establishment of a typology. In order to be considered as an IKC, DARIAH has predefined different types of IKC and takes into account the possibility that IKCs may evolve from one type into another. A third element is standardisation. To be considered an IKC, specific standards and metadata must be complied with.

A self-assessment carried out by the partners who submit a contribution is a first step to evaluate if these criteria are met. The second step involves a peer review process to identify a contribution as an IKC. In the future, DARIAH also plans to integrate users' feedback and satisfaction as a means to assess the validity of the tools offered by DARIAH and to understand which new tools could be developed.

Quality assessment is also based on guidelines for the implementation for each type of IKC. However, no further details on the content of these guidelines were provided in the documents analysed.

To sum up, quality is monitored by standardised reporting on the IKC (including metadata) and a peer review process which could be further supplemented with user feedback mechanisms. Guidelines can also be drawn up concerning the implementation of each type of IKC. Although the quality control processes analysed did not refer specifically to KPIs, the mechanisms discussed aim to ensure that IKCs have a minimum of uniformity and comply with accepted professional criteria as a contribution needs to undergo a peer review with peers selected by the research infrastructure in order to be accepted as an IKC.

6.4 The process of EHRI-ERIC

Developing its own process for handling IKCs, EHRI-ERIC has opted for a method which is as lightweight as possible. This is achieved 1) by using as much of the previous concept as possible, thereby standardising the process per type of contribution where possible and 2) by only including checks and balances that are essential in ensuring that IKCs are of sufficient quality with an adequate amount of documentation for reference purposes.

The process for IKCs that are included in the updated EHRI-ERIC typology is illustrated in Figure 4.

²³ A. Biljesko a.o., **D1.8 In-kind contribution**.

²⁴ L. de Leeuw a.o. **D5.1 Report on Integrated Service!Needs**.

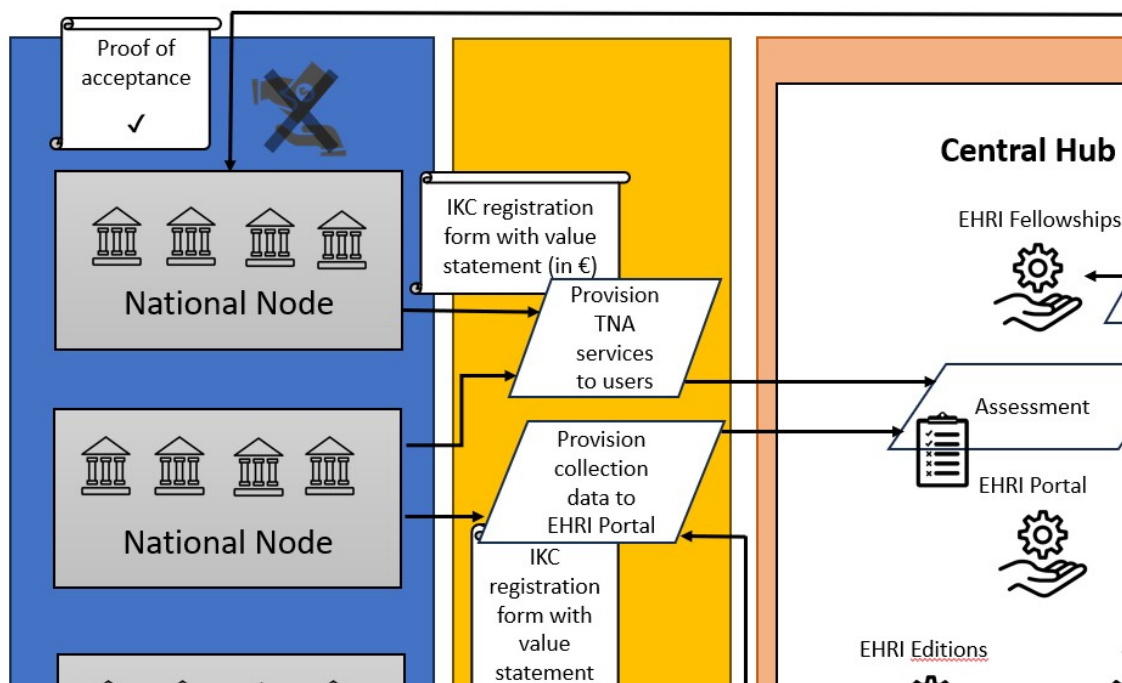


Figure 4: Process for IKCs that are included in EHRI-ERIC's typology

Step 1: Operation

Institutions carry out the work that is needed for contributions that are in the typology to come to fruition. This step is overseen by the coordinator of the National Node. If an IKC is **not** in the typology, NNs are invited to contact the CH to discuss the idea together. In a meeting, the NN and the CH will determine whether the planned activity is fit for purpose and whether it aligns with EHRI-ERIC's mission.

Step 2: Submission

For the contribution to be recognised by the ERIC, the NN (via the NC) submits a form describing the IKC in a standardised metadata format that includes all relevant descriptive information specific to the contribution. The form also includes a table in which the monetary value of the IKC is estimated. For each contribution, the table proposes a list of likely cost items, as well as a formula that can assist the applicant in arriving at a figure (in euros) that can be reported. Apart from that, a certain degree of flexibility is required to properly address the uniqueness of each contribution.

Step 3: Review

The Central Hub checks the IKC against the submission form and an agreed set of quality criteria. For the development of these quality standards, a designated task is planned in the EHRI-IP project, **T2.3 Monitoring, quality assurance and risk management**. This step will ensure that EHRIs offering remains of the highest standard.

Step 4: Evaluation

There are two possible outcomes of the review process:

- **Acceptance:** the IKC is registered, the information on the contribution is added to EHRI's bookkeeping systems and the product (if applicable) is embedded into EHRI-ERIC's infrastructure
- **Changes required:** the Central Hub asks the NN to 1) clarify information in the submission form and/or 2) to update/improve aspects of the contribution where needed.

As a last step in the evaluation, the Central Hub considers adding an IKC to the typology if it is not yet included (refer to step 1 for the initial discussion of IKCs outside the typology). If the decision is made to include the contribution as a standard one, a form is also developed for submitting similar contributions in the future and quality criteria are agreed upon.

7 Next steps

With the submission of this deliverable, the development of the IKC policy of EHRI-ERIC is on track. At the same time, a small set of follow-up activities still need to be carried out for it to be completely operationalised. Below, a concise overview of these activities is presented to provide a clear overview of the work to be done.

7.1 Setting up monitoring, quality assurance and risk management controls

Like other EHRI services, IKCs need to meet high quality standards. Over the course of 2025, **T2.3 Monitoring, quality assurance and risk management** will develop the processes that oversee EHRI's work, thereby ensuring that its products and services live up to EHRI's long-standing reputation. With IKCs being a vital mode for the delivery of these products and services, it logically follows that they need to be included in EHRI-ERIC's monitoring, quality assurance and risk management policies.

7.2 Developing tailored registration forms, specific to each IKC

With the drafting of a form for each type of IKC, the Central Hub can streamline the collection of data, the estimation of the monetary value and the quality review of these contributions. To do this, EHRI will use prior knowledge of its already existing services from past projects to draw up relevant metadata schemas for partners to fill out. This will make it easier for partner institutions to list the cost items associated with the contribution and their respective values.

7.3 Setting up rules on valuing an IKC

Following the desktop study conducted in this deliverable, EHRI-ERIC needs to set up a system for valuing IKC based on relatively simple and straight-forward rules that are sufficiently accurate. Costs for which a quotation or invoice exists – such as goods, outsourced work etc. – are easy to report. The most important category of expenses is the time invested by personnel from partner institutions. A simple yet effective solution EHRI-ERIC is currently exploring is to agree on an average hourly rate per country, based on international best practices (e.g. those of ERASMUS or Horizon accounting rules).

7.4 Forecasting by NNs

To help the CH in planning the scope and quantity of its service offering, it would be beneficial to develop an overview of the expected contributions from NNs well ahead of time. In a conversation with the NNs early in 2025, the timing proved to be a bit too short for NNs to submit a multi-annual plan. This conversation was put on hold but will be revisited later in 2025.

7.5 Reaching agreement with the NCC and the GA

As with EHRI's financial plan, once the Project management Board agrees on both the content of this deliverable and the additional agreements as summarised in this section, the NCC and the GA will have to approve of the IKC strategy as well (consecutively). A strategy paper will be presented to both bodies to ascertain whether they are in favour of the proposed plans and their implementation.