



# IRISCC

## **International Assessment Panel – TERMS OF REFERENCE**



Disclaimer: Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

## Table of contents

1	Role, purpose and scope .....	3
2	Composition and appointment .....	3
3	Mandate .....	4
3.1	Tasks of the experts .....	4
3.2	Effort required .....	4
4	Working approach and methods .....	5
5	Code of Conduct .....	5

# 1 Role, purpose and scope

The IRISCC International Assessment Panel (IAP) is a large, impartial pool of experts with broad expertise in IRISCC science fields. The Panel is the consolidated source of reviewers, enlisted for the entire project duration, whose members are periodically drawn to serve on review panels for individual transnational access (TA) proposals based on their expertise. Additionally, IAP is also entrusted with the periodic assessment report of virtual access (VA) provision every 18 months. Details of this assessment are established in Work Package (WP) 9 on VA provision and communicated to the IAP as soon as defined.

As for TA, the Panel guarantees that TA proposals submitted by users are selected based on an expert, sound, fair, and transparent assessment.

The scope of the panels' evaluation encompasses the proposal research focus, scientific merit, technical soundness and potential for impact, as well as the background and suitability of the user group. Experts will only evaluate proposals that align with their expertise and do not cause any conflict of interest concerning the users or research facility concerned or specific national interests.

The details of the TA proposal evaluation process and the main criteria are described in the TA Evaluation Guidelines that will be provided to members of the IAP.

The IRISCC evaluation process is managed by the Work Package (WP) 8 TA Management Team, consisting of the ACTRIS Service and Access Management Unit (SAMU) staff.

## 2 Composition and appointment

The IAP comprises experts with strong scientific and technical expertise in the different areas touched by the IRISCC project (natural sciences, Earth and related environmental sciences, atmospheric sciences, climatology, climate changes and social sciences).

Reviewers have knowledge of the latest scientific progress, including new developments/technologies in the relevant domains, and a deep understanding of the key open issues in addressing global climate change challenges.

The experts who have accepted to become members of the IAP are officially acknowledged by the IRISCC General Assembly/Executive Board.

IAP members are appointed for the entire duration of the IRISCC project, starting from the date of their nomination. An IAP member may withdraw from the IAP at any time upon

written notification to the WP8 TA Management Team/SAMU. In cases of resignation, the WP8 TA Management Team/SAMU evaluates if and how to proceed to replacement.

## 3 Mandate

The IAP mandate is to assess TA proposals submitted by users and make recommendations on those that should be granted access under the IRISCC project.

The IAP mandate includes the tasks identified in section 3.1.

### 3.1 Tasks of the experts

IAP members serve on ad-hoc review panels established by the WP8 TA Management Team/SAMU for evaluating individual TA proposals based on the required diverse knowledge and experience in the relevant fields.

Ad-hoc panels shall include three experts maximum, who perform individual reviews of the TA proposals.

Upon receiving a request to serve in an ad-hoc review panel, the expert shall report any conflict of interest (see section 5) or, in case, any temporary unavailability to take part in the review of the specific individual TA proposal assigned.

Individual review of the proposals consists of:

- Reading and examining the proposal, and evaluating its main elements (the research project and the applicant user group) against the general criteria<sup>1</sup> and weights detailed in the IRISCC TA Evaluation Guidelines.
- Assigning scores for each criterion.
- Providing brief explanatory comments sustaining the score given.

### 3.2 Effort required

The WP8 TA Management Team/SAMU shall seek to guarantee an appropriate balance of the workload for each expert, ensuring that reviewers are invited to evaluate a fair and reasonable amount of proposals per year.

---

<sup>1</sup> Review criteria cover, among others, the *Scientific/Technical relevance* (scientific value, impacts, alignment to IRISCC strategic priorities), *Novelty and Innovation* (use of new technology/methodology/approach), *Quality and efficiency of the implementation* (quality of the workplan and qualification of the user)

The effort required for reviewing the individual TA proposals can be roughly estimated, in general, in ½ working day maximum, based on the complexity of the request. TA proposals are typically concise.

Experts in the ad-hoc panels have 15 days to conclude the individual reviews and release the recommendations for selection, provided that no additional integrations or clarifications for the assessment are required. In case of need (e.g., if the requested access is not urgent and is scheduled at a later stage), additional time can be allowed for the expert, on request, to complete the review in a reasonably more extended term.

Where explanations and integrations are needed, the panel members shall inform the WP8 TA Management Team/SAMU, which will interact with the user accordingly and adjust the timeline, where needed.

## 4 Working approach and methods

The working approach adopted for the IAP is flexible, giving experts complete control over where, when, and the hours they work on reviewing the assigned proposals, provided that they can keep the schedule envisaged at the time of the assignment.

The working language is English.

Remote work is the rule, being most suited to fulfil the tasks.

Reviewer work is completed via the ACTRIS PASS, the online platform for managing the access process (<https://passactris.smapply.io>).

The WP8 TA Management Team/SAMU takes all possible measures to ensure sufficient flexibility of the working methods in order to manage the review of TA projects dynamically.

The expert cannot delegate the work to another person or be replaced by another person.

## 5 Code of Conduct

The IAP members serve in their personal and technical capacities and do not represent their employer, institution or any other entity.

The IAP members perform the assigned reviews in a confidential, impartial, fair, and equitable way. They also agree to disclose to the WP8 TA Management Team/SAMU any interest, affiliation, or different factor that may create an actual or perceived conflict of interest in assessing a specific proposal.

IAP members must have no conflict of interest with applicants for access to a facility in IRISCC or communicate and discuss the assigned TA proposal with any other IAP member except those in the same ad-hoc panel established for review of the said proposal.

Unless foreseen by the procedure, the IAP members reviewing a TA proposal must not directly communicate with persons involved in the proposal, namely the principal investigator, any team members or any person linked to the users' affiliated entities.

The IAP experts serving on a review panel shall maintain the confidentiality of any documents or files received for the evaluation, deleting all copies of the files they may have stored on personal devices<sup>2</sup> upon completion of the assignment.

They must not disclose the results of the evaluation outcome.

---

<sup>2</sup> Except the information stored on the space reserved for them on the access management platform ACTRIS PASS.