



Brussels, 29 September 2022

JRC DECISION
adopting
RULES ON THE CONTRIBUTION TO
TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE EXPENSES OF EXTERNAL USERS
ACCESS TO THE PHYSICAL RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES
OF THE JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE (JRC),

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community, and in particular Article 8 thereof,

The following legal instrument provides for accessing JRC facilities to third parties:

- Annex I, Pillar II, section 7.2.4 of Council Decision (EU) 2021/764¹:

Scientific Excellence - The JRC shall pursue excellence and integrity in research and extensive collaboration with top level research institutions worldwide. It will carry out research in emerging fields of science and technology and promote open science and open data as well as knowledge transfer.

Broad Lines

- [...]
- Access to JRC research infrastructures;
- Training of scientists and national experts; [...]
- Annex I of Council Regulation (Euratom) 2021/765²:

The specific objectives referred to in Article 3(2) shall be pursued across the Euratom Programme, according to the broad lines of activity described in this Annex. [...]

(b) maintain and further develop expertise and competence in the nuclear field within the Community:

- (i) education, training and mobility [...]*
- (v) support for the provision, availability and appropriate access of European and international research infrastructures, including JRC's infrastructures (5);*

¹ Council Decision (EU) 2021/764 of 10 May 2021 establishing the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, and repealing Decision 2013/743/EU (Text with EEA relevance)

² Council Regulation (Euratom) 2021/765 of 10 May 2021 establishing the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community for the period 2021-2025 complementing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation and repealing Regulation (Euratom) 2018/1563

Whereas:

- (1) The JRC Strategy 2030 "Infrastructures Fit for Purpose"³ foresees opening up JRC's research infrastructure to external use, with the purpose of giving access to European researchers and industry, as well as to raise the value and visibility of JRC's research infrastructures. Granting access to JRC research infrastructures fulfils scientific needs and provides benefit to the research of external users.
- (2) The 'Framework for access to the physical research infrastructures of the JRC' considers two modes of access: relevance- and market-driven.

The relevance-driven access is based on a peer-review selection process following a call for proposals. Relevance-driven access is mainly targeted to academia and research institutions, as well as to SMEs. It is financed from institutional resources. Accordingly, Access to nuclear research infrastructures is free of charge. However, Users accessing JRC non-nuclear RIs will be charged for the additional costs associated to such access.

Market-driven access is mainly targeted to industry and is granted upon payment of a fee covering the full access costs of the JRC.

- (3) The 'Framework for access to the physical research infrastructures of the JRC *for the purposes of training and capacity building*' is based on a peer-review selection process following a call for proposals. It is mainly targeted to researchers and technicians from academia and research institutions, as well as to SMEs possessing, planning to use, build or upgrade a research infrastructure similar or complementary to the research infrastructure offering training and capacity building at the JRC. Access is financed from institutional resources. Accordingly, the JRC provides access free of charge to Users.
- (4) Following a consistent line of EU research policy, the Horizon Europe work programme⁴ envisages specific measures to address significant internal disparities in terms of research and innovation performance of Member States and Associated Countries under the heading of 'Widening participation and spreading excellence'. In the interest of a coherent approach, it is appropriate to cover the travel and subsistence expenses necessary for the physical access to JRC research infrastructures by users from institutions located in countries falling under the Widening participation and spreading excellence action under the Horizon Europe work programme. This should encourage the participation of users from such countries, allow to better exploit the potential of Europe's talent pool, and ensure that the benefits of the open access to JRC research infrastructures are maximised and widely distributed across the Member States as well as in countries associated to the Horizon Europe programme.
- (5) For the sake of consistency, the JRC should apply the same set of rules as adopted in this decision where it is called to provide access to its research infrastructures based on other instruments. Notably, the work programme for 2019-2020 of the Euratom Research and Training Programme⁵ includes an Administrative arrangement with the JRC on a pilot action on open access to JRC

³ https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/jrcsh/files/jrc-strategy-2030_en.pdf

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/widening-participation-and-spreading-excellence_en

⁵ Commission Implementing Decision of 14.12.2018 on the financing of indirect actions within the framework of Council Regulation (Euratom) No 2018/1563 and on the adoption of the work programme for 2019-2020, C(20018) 8412 final.

research infrastructure to offer third parties free of charge access to those research facilities. Accordingly, within the limits of the budget available for this pilot action, JRC would cover the travel and subsistence of users from EU Member States and countries associated to the Euratom Research Programme for projects on nuclear safety and involving access to JRC nuclear research infrastructures. This approach should be followed in other similar cases or initiatives in the future.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

ARTICLE 1 - Scope

(1) These rules shall apply to the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses necessary for the physical access of Users to the JRC Research Infrastructure, in accordance with the Framework for Access to the Physical Research Infrastructures of the Joint Research Centre (JRC)⁶ and with the Framework for Access to the Physical Research Infrastructures of the JRC for the purposes of training and capacity building (hereinafter referred to as 'the Framework') adopted by the Director General of the JRC on 7 November 2022. For the purpose of the present Decision, the term 'User' also extends to anyone responsible for accompanying a User⁷ (as defined in Article 3.b of the Framework) with disabilities who has been invited by the Commission.

(2) Remote access does not entail the physical presence of Users at the Research Infrastructure and does not entitle to reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses.

ARTICLE 2 – Entitlement to reimbursement

(1) The persons indicated in Article 1 may be entitled to reimbursement only where such entitlement and its modality has been explicitly stated by the JRC in the letter of invitation issued to the User.

(2) To determine the entitlement of specific Users to reimbursement in accordance with paragraph (1), the JRC will take into account, inter alia, the available budget and the objective of maximizing the benefits for the User Access Project and the access to the JRC research infrastructure.

(3) For short-term stays under Article 3, at the request of the User and subject to the Agreement of the Head of Unit of the JRC Research Infrastructure, the JRC may carry out direct payments to providers of travel, accommodation and subsistence services (such as meals) for the User. In that case, the User will not be entitled to any additional reimbursement of travel expenses under Article 4, or to any payment in whole or in part of the daily allowance and accommodation allowance for short-term stays under Article 5.

⁶ The Framework defines Research Infrastructures as physical facilities, resources and services that are used to conduct research and foster innovation in their fields through the use of major scientific equipment (or sets of instruments) complemented by knowledge-based resources (e.g. collections, archives and scientific data) that are essential to achieve excellence in research and innovation. All facilities of the JRC are 'single-sited' (i.e. physically located in one site).

ARTICLE 3 – Short and long term stays

(1) Users shall be reimbursed for their travel and subsistence expenses when staying at any of the JRC sites in two different modalities, depending to the duration of their stay:

- (a) Short-term stays corresponding each to a stay of up to 20 User Stay Days⁸.
- (b) Long-term stays corresponding each to a stay exceeding 20 User Stay Days, up to a maximum of 200 User Stay Days.

(2) The invitation for short- and long-term stays will indicate the calendar dates within which the User Stay Days may be completed by the User. It will also explicitly state whether the User is entitled to reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses in accordance with Article (2) and the modality of the reimbursement. Completion of the User Stay Days needs to take place within the same User Access Project.

(3) For the same User within the same User Access Project:

- (a) In case the interval between two long-term stays is less than 90 calendar days only one return ticket will be reimbursed.
- (b) In case the interval between two short-term stays is less than 14 calendar days only one return ticket will be reimbursed.
- (c) The minimum interval between a short-term stay and a long-term stay may not be less than 30 calendar days.

(4) The JRC may pay an additional return ticket to the User should it not be possible to work on the User Access Project for a period longer than 7 calendar days for short-term stays, and for a period longer than 14 calendar days for long-term stays.

ARTICLE 4 – Travel expenses

(1) The provisions in this Article apply to both short-term and long term stays.

(2) All Users shall be entitled to the reimbursement of their travel expenses from the place specified in their invitation (work or home address) to the place of Access⁹, by the most appropriate means of transport given the distance involved. In general, for journeys of less than 400 km (one way, according to official distance by rail) this shall be second class rail travel, and for distances of more than 400 km economy class air travel.

⁸ The Framework defines a User Stay Day as a day of physical presence of a User at the concerned Research Infrastructure for Access related to the User Access Project. A User Stay Day counts as a registered entry to the JRC site where the Research Infrastructure is located.

⁹ The Framework defines Access as the legitimate and authorised physical, remote* and virtual admission to, interactions with and use of Research Infrastructures. Such Access can be granted, amongst others, to machine time, computing resources, software, data, data-communication services, trust and authentication services, sample preparation, archives, collections, the set-up, execution and dismantling of experiments, education and training, expert support and analytical services. Access to research data will be in line with the JRC Data Policy.

Only one return (outward and inward travels) journey will be reimbursed for each short- or long-term stay.

(3) The authorising officers for commitments shall specifically try to ensure that the User Stay Days are organised in such a way as to enable Users to benefit from the most economical travel rates. The authorising officers for payments shall scrutinise particularly closely any requests for reimbursement involving abnormally expensive flights. They shall have the right to carry out any checks that might be needed and to request any proof from the User required for this purpose. They shall also have the right, where it appears to be justified, to restrict reimbursement to the rates normally applied to the usual journey from the User's place of work or residence to the place of Access.

(4) Travel expenses shall be reimbursed on presentation of supporting documents: tickets and invoices or, in the case of online bookings, the printout of the electronic reservation and boarding cards for the outward journey. The documents supplied must show the class of travel used, the time of travel and the amount paid.

(5) The cost of travel by private car shall be reimbursed at the rate per km provided for in Article 3(5) of the Annex to Commission Decision (2007)5858, and in any modification thereto. For trips exceeding 1000 km the supporting documents (highway tolls, carburant receipt) are required.

(6) Taxi fares shall only be reimbursed to and from the train station nearest to the place of Access, where JRC does not provide a Shuttle service to reach the place of Access. Such reimbursement shall need to be authorised by the competent authorising officer.

ARTICLE 5 – Daily allowance and accommodation allowance for short-term stays

(1) The daily allowance paid for short-term stays is a flat rate to cover all expenditure at the place of Access, including for example meals and local transport (bus, tram, metro, taxi, parking, motorway tolls, etc.), as well as travel and accident insurance.

(2) The daily allowance for each User Stay Day shall be the same as provided for in Article 4(2) of the Annex to Commission Decision (2007)5858, and in any modification thereto.

(3) If the place of departure cited in the invitation is 100 km or less from the place of Access, the daily allowance shall be reduced by 50%.

(4) Users who have to spend one or more nights at the place of Access because the times of Access are incompatible with the times of flights or trains¹⁰, shall also be entitled to an accommodation allowance. The allowance per User Stay Day shall be the same as provided for in Article 4(4) of the Annex to Commission Decision (2007)5858, and in any modification thereto. The number of nights may not exceed the number of User Stay Days + 1.

¹⁰ As a general rule, Users cannot be required:

- to leave their place of work or residence or the place of access before 07.00 (station or other means of transport) or 08.00 (airport);
- to arrive at the place of access after 21.00 (airport) or 22.00 (station or other means of transport);
- to arrive at their place of work or residence after 23.00 (airport, station or other means of transport).

(5) The competent authorising officer may explicitly authorise that the accommodation allowance may exceed the amount set in Article 5(4) in exceptional and duly justified cases where particular circumstances apply.

(6) An additional accommodation allowance and/or daily allowance may exceptionally be paid if prolonging the stay would enable the User to obtain a reduction in the cost of transport worth more than the amount of these allowances.

(7) Where, taking into account any expenses incurred by disabled Users as a result of their disability or any person accompanying them, the allowances provided for in Article 5 appear to be clearly inadequate, the expenses shall be reimbursed when authorised by the competent authorising officer on presentation of supporting documents.

ARTICLE 6 – Basic allowance for long-term stays

(1) The basic allowance paid for long-term stays is a flat rate to cover all expenditure at the place of Access, including for example meals and local transport (bus, tram, metro, taxi, parking, motorway tolls, etc.), as well as accommodation and travel and accident insurance.

(2) The basic allowance for each User Stay Day shall be EUR 80.00.

(3) The competent authorising officer may explicitly authorise that the basic allowance may exceed the amount set in Article 6(2) in exceptional and duly justified cases where particular circumstances apply.

(4) If the place of departure cited in the invitation is 50 km or less from the place of Access, the basic allowance shall be reduced by 50%.

(5) Where, taking into account any expenses incurred by disabled Users as a result of their disability or any person accompanying them, the allowances provided for in Article 6 appear to be clearly inadequate, the expenses shall be reimbursed when authorised by the competent authorising officer on presentation of supporting documents.

ARTICLE 7 – Reimbursement of medical certificates

The JRC will reimburse reasonable and justified costs to obtain a medical certificate when required by the JRC for full medical clearance of users visiting JRC Research Infrastructures. The requirement for medical clearance will depend on the JRC site and length of stay of the User.

ARTICLE 8 – Reimbursement from other sources

Unless stated otherwise in the letter of invitation issued to the User, the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses in accordance with the present Decision is on condition that the Users declare on their honour that they are not receiving a similar allowance or similar allowances from the Commission or another EU institution for the same visit. They may also be subject to additional controls and inspections, before or after the reimbursement, in accordance with applicable rules to safeguard the financial interests of the European Union.

ARTICLE 9 - Currency

(1) Travel expenses shall be reimbursed in euros, where appropriate at the rate of exchange applying on the User Stay Day.

(2) The daily and basic allowance and, where appropriate, the accommodation allowance, shall be reimbursed in euros at the flat rate applicable on the User Stay Day.

ARTICLE 10 – Entry into force

These rules shall enter into force as from the date of signature by the Director General of the JRC.

(e-signed)

Stephen QUEST