

Deliverable D5.4: Details of the ACTRIS National Facility labelling process

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1 Purpose of the document

The **ACTRIS labelling process** aims at ensuring the operational capacity of ACTRIS and the high quality of ACTRIS data by granting the label "**ACTRIS National Facility**" to Observational and Exploratory Platforms that comply with the ACTRIS standards. The ACTRIS labelling principles and the steps of the labelling process are introduced in the *Documentation on ACTRIS National Facility labelling principles* (D5.3) and have been approved by the Interim ACTRIS Council in its 5th Meeting (Lyon, 25-26 October 2018). The present document (D5.4) aims at providing more details of the process, including templates for collecting information from the partners involved in the process as well as key performance indicators (KPIs) used in the performance evaluation of the National Facilities (NFs).

Chapter 2 briefly summarizes the labelling process following the descriptions in D5.3. Chapter 3 explains the details of the procedures of Step 1 of the labelling process, which aims at granting the ACTRIS label to NFs. Chapter 4 deals with Step 2 of the process, which is dedicated to the regular re-evaluation of the NFs in order to keep the label over the lifetime of the Research Infrastructure (RI). Annex A contains related tables and templates. Applicable documents and the link to the ACTRIS glossary are provided in Annex B.

2 Overview of the ACTRIS labelling process

Figure 1 shows the timeline of the ACTRIS labelling process in connection to the ACTRIS National Facility lifecycle. The process consists of two major steps. The first step aims at granting the ACTRIS label and is conducted during the implementation and pre-operation phases of the candidate NF (which are not necessarily simultaneous to the respective phases of the ACTRIS ERIC). It comprises three sub-steps: 1a) initial acceptance, 1b) performance evaluation and 1c) approval. The second step of the labelling process represents the continuous monitoring and re-evaluation of the operational NF over the lifetime of the RI.

To perform the labelling process, interactions are required between the ACTRIS Head Office (HO), the bodies of the ACTRIS ERIC, i.e. the General Assembly (GA) and the Research Infrastructure Committee (RI Com), the Central Facilities (CFs) and the national Research Performing Organizations (RPOs) that implement and operate the NFs, in order to assess and permanently monitor the compliance of the NFs with the ACTRIS standards. These standards are defined in various applicable documents (see Annex A). In particular, the technical concepts and requirements for ACTRIS NFs, including conditions for access provision, are described in the documents D5.1 (*Documentation on technical concepts and requirements for ACTRIS Observational Platforms*) and D5.2 (*Documentation on technical concepts and requirements for ACTRIS Exploratory Platforms*). Additional principles regarding access and data policy are described in the documents D6.3 (*Report on access rules and modalities and recommendations for ACTRIS access policy*), D2.6 (*ACTRIS Access and Service Policy*) and D2.3 (*ACTRIS Data Policy*). In the following, the strategy and the tools that are used to implement the ACTRIS labelling process are described in detail.

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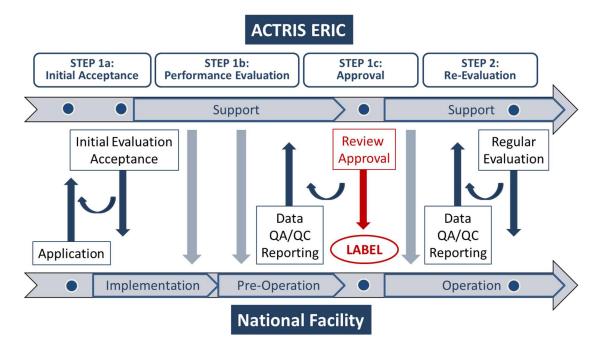


Fig. 1: Steps and actions of the ACTRIS labelling process. The upper horizontal arrow indicates the responsibilities of the ACTRIS ERIC, including the CFs, the RI Com and the GA, whereas the lower arrow stands for the activities of the NF. Vertical arrows illustrate the interactions between the ERIC and the NF. The dark blue dots on the horizontal arrows mark the major points of action within the process.

3 Implementation of Step 1 of the ACTRIS labelling process

The implementation of ACTRIS requires major efforts both at national and European levels in order to identify, assess and finally fully integrate the entire suite of Operational and Exploratory Platforms operated by the national RPOs into the operational framework of the European RI. Step 1 of the ACTRIS labelling process aims at steering these efforts by providing necessary guidance and tools for the interaction between the involved partners with the ultimate goal to grant the ACTRIS label to those facilities that are compliant with the ACTRIS standards.

Since ACTRIS is a very large and highly distributed RI with potentially more than 100 NFs in more than 20 countries, it is essential to set up well-defined, efficient, tailored and streamlined management procedures in order to ensure equal and impartial treatment of the NFs, while keeping the managerial and administrative efforts at a reasonable level for all partners. Therefore, web-based tools, connected to a central **NF database** for storing and administrating the NF-related information, shall be used in the process. In this document, some example templates for collecting information are presented. They should be considered as content outlines only, which will be transferred into respective interactive web tools later on. The procedures will be implemented in the framework of WP5 of the ACTRIS IMP project. In this project, a labelling pilot action will be set up, involving experienced NFs and CFs, to test and optimize the labelling process, it will be documented in the ACTRIS NF Labelling Plan (D5.1 of ACTRIS IMP).

3.1 Step 1a: Initial acceptance

Step 1a, aiming at the initial acceptance of the candidate NF, includes the following actions (see D5.3, some modifications and clarifications are made here):

- 1. The potential NF is identified and agreed upon at country level, which may include national agreements on responsibilities, funding, governance, commitments, etc. The country delegate in the GA provides the list of NFs agreed at national level to the HO.
- 2. The application is submitted by the RPO(s) responsible for the NF. The application shall include
 - a description of the NF regarding platform type(s), name of the NF, host country, names and contact information of the host institution(s) and PI(s), location, scientific role, heritage and goals,
 - a statement regarding the Certificate(s) of Compliance requested for the NF,
 - a description of the instrumentation to be operated and the variables (for Operational Platforms) or experimental data (for Exploratory Platforms) to be submitted,
 - a description of the expertise of the RPO(s) responsible for the NF,
 - a statement regarding intended provision of physical access to the NF and, if access shall be provided, a description of access capabilities and ability of service provision, together with demonstrated user interest (e.g., by past transnational access records or quantitative impact studies),
 - a **statement of acceptance** of the ACTRIS data policy, ACTRIS access and service policy and other relevant ACTRIS documents (as requested by the ERIC), signed by the legal signatory of the responsible RPO(s),
 - an indication of the instruments for which operation support is required from the associated TC and DC units,
 - a **5-year plan** describing the activities for implementation and (pre-)operation of the NF,
 - a **commitment** of the resources for long-term operation of the NF, signed by the legal signatory of the responsible RPO(s) (RI operations are envisaged to run over >20 years, a commitment at least for the next 5 years is expected).

If RPOs that intend to implement and operate an NF need advice for the application regarding, e.g., technical concepts, they are encouraged to contact the associated CF units.

- 3. The HO initiates the evaluation process.
- 4. The application is evaluated by the RI Com, with support from the associated CF units. If necessary, clarifications may be requested from the RPO(s) that intend(s) to implement and operate the NF.
- 5. The RI Com makes a recommendation regarding the initial acceptance (or refusal) of the NF.
- The Director General, with the mandate from the GA, makes the decision on the initial acceptance (or refusal) of the NF and informs the member country and the RPO(s) formally (Letter of Initial Acceptance/Refusal). In case of refusal, the letter must contain a detailed statement of the

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reasons and a follow-up recommendation (i.e., under which conditions a revised application is feasible).

7. If the NF is initially accepted, the representative of the NF receives the voting right in the National Facilities Assembly.

The Step 1a procedure will mainly be facilitated by means of a **web-based tool** used to collect the information from the potential NFs, as required under item 2 above. The tool shall also allow its users to **upload pdf documents** such as the 5-year plan, the statement of acceptance of ACTRIS policies and the commitment of the resources for long-term operation. **Templates** for these documents will be provided for download via the web-based tool as well. The tool will be tailored for three types of NFs (Observational Platforms, Atmospheric Simulation Chambers/Laboratory Platforms and Mobile Platforms), for which slightly different information is required. **Tables 1-3** in Annex A show the respective outlines. After the application has been completed, the HO will invite the RI Com and the associated CF units to provide their evaluations and the final recommendations regarding the initial acceptance of the NF via the web-based tool. Respective check boxes and entry fields for evaluation comments will be provided for this purpose. The RI Com shall assign one TC or the Simulation Chamber Committee¹ to take the lead in evaluating the NF. The associated CF units from which input is needed shall be identified in the web-based tool according to the selections made in the application form, and the related check boxes and entry fields shall be generated automatically. All information will be stored in the NF database.

3.2 Step 1b: Performance evaluation

Step 1b of the labelling process comprises the performance evaluation during the NF implementation and pre-operation phases as follows (see D5.3, some modifications and clarifications are made here):

- 1. At the national level, work ensuring the proper installation of the NF following the ACTRIS standards is performed:
 - The NF is set up or upgraded according to the ACTRIS technical concepts and requirements.
 - The NF implements the ACTRIS standard procedures.
 - The NF participates in the required QA/QC activities.
 - The NF starts initial operation and submits data to the associated TC/DC units.
- 2. Continuous support is provided by the CFs:
 - The associated TC and DC units support implementation and pre-operation of the NF.
 - The associated TC units supervise the measurement QA/QC activities at the NF.
 - The associated TC and DC units supervise the data QA/QC activities at the NF and control the quality of data submitted by the NF.
 - The associated TC and DC units provide advice on improvements and adjustments, if necessary.

¹ The Simulation Chamber Committee shall be established as part of the RI Com with the aim to take care of specific issues related to atmospheric simulation chambers and laboratory platforms, in particular their scientific positioning in the RI and their compliance with the protocols and requirements for chambers and laboratories.

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3. The HO coordinates exchange of information between CFs, RI Com and GA regarding the progress of implementation and pre-operation of the NF. **Regular reporting** may be requested. The pre-operation phase will be concluded (see Step 1c) when the candidate NF has demonstrated compliance with ACTRIS data submission and QA/QC requirements over a period of at least two preceding years (the period can start before the application was made, if the NF had already achieved the required level of compliance). If a candidate NF does not reach the required level of compliance in Step 1b after 5 years, the HO shall submit a report to the GA, and the GA may decide on the refusal of the candidate NF.

Most of the activities of Step 1b require individual efforts and exchange between the NF and the associated CF units. The TCs may provide set-up guidelines for specific NF types and may also offer to perform site audits in order to advice the NFs in the setup process. The CFs shall define milestones and performance checks for each type of NF, which have to be achieved during the NF implementation and pre-operation phases. NF and CF units shall report on achieved milestones (e.g., measurement status, application of QA/QC measures, data submission status, access provision) via a series of check boxes in the web-based tool.

3.3 Step 1c: Approval and granting of the ACTRIS label

Step 1c of the labelling process, aiming at approval of the NF and granting of the ACTRIS label, includes the following actions (see D5.3, some modifications and clarifications are made here):

- 1. The HO steers the approval process by requesting readiness reports from the CFs regularly.
- 2. The associated TC and DC units **report** on the readiness of the NF to the HO.
- 3. The RI Com evaluates the status of readiness and provides the **recommendation** for approval of the NF.
- 4. The HO prepares the **decision proposal** with justifications for the GA.
- 5. The GA makes the **decision** on the approval of the NF and the granting of the ACTRIS label.
- 6. The HO prepares the **contractual agreement** which must be signed by all parties.
- 7. The HO awards the **ACTRIS label** to the NF.

The web-based tool containing the achieved milestones reported under Step 1b will be used to follow the status of readiness of the NF. When the NF has reached the required level of maturity, the associated TC and DC units, under the lead of the assigned responsible TC or the Simulation Chamber Committee, will prepare an evaluation report with the recommendation of granting the label. The report, including an abstract for the decision proposal, will be sent to the HO and the RI Com for a commenting round. If no questions or doubts are raised, the HO will prepare the decision proposal, and the Director General will propose the approval of the NF to the GA.

Contractual agreement templates will be prepared by WP2 of the ACTRIS IMP project. After the agreement is signed, the HO will send a printed document on the award of the ACTRIS label to the NF, with the signatures of the Director General and the Chair of the GA.

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4 Implementation of Step 2 of the ACTRIS labelling process

Step 2 of the labelling process facilitates the continuous monitoring and regular performance assessment of the NF, which will be part of the overall research infrastructure operative monitoring and evaluation. Here, only a brief outline is given. The overall RI monitoring and evaluation concept will be defined during the ACTRIS implementation phase. Thus, more details of the Step 2 procedure will be defined later on.

During the lifetime of the RI, the following obligations for maintaining the ACTRIS label shall apply (see D5.3, some modifications and clarifications are made here):

- A continuous monitoring of the NF performance is carried out by the associated TC and DC units, the Simulation Chamber Committee for atmospheric simulation chambers and laboratory platforms and the SAMU for NFs providing physical access. The results are regularly **report**ed to the HO. Severe issues of non-compliance of NFs with the ACTRIS requirements obtained during this monitoring process shall be reported to the GA, which may take further action.
- 2. A formal re-evaluation of the NF shall take place every 5 years and shall require the following actions:
 - The NF **report**s on its activities over the last 5 years, provides a **new 5-year plan** and a **renewal of the commitment** of the resources for long-term operation (at least for the next 5 years) to the HO.
 - The associated TC and DC units, the Simulation Chamber Committee for atmospheric simulation chambers and laboratory platforms and the SAMU for NFs providing physical access provide an assessment of the technical performance of the NF to the HO (see assessment criteria below).
 - The HO assesses the administrative and management performance of the NF (see assessment criteria below).
 - The HO provides an **assessment report** to the GA.
 - The GA decides on the confirmation or withdrawal of the ACTRIS label.
 - The HO informs the member country formally.

The PI of the respective NF and the National Contact Person are kept informed throughout the process. In case of withdrawal of the ACTRIS label, the HO shall provide a detailed statement of the reasons and a follow-up recommendation, including the conditions under which a reapplication and restart of the labelling process are feasible. The statement will be brought to the attention of the PI of the NF, the National Contact Person and the GA delegate of the country in due course. The NF has 60 days for a response to the HO regarding the acceptance of withdrawal or proposed actions and timelines for reapplication. The HO is responsible for documenting and concluding the process.

Similar as for Step 1, a web-based tool connected to the NF database, will be used to facilitate the continuous monitoring and regular performance assessment of the NFs. As described above, the tool shall provide functions to download templates and to upload requested documents. Continuous monitoring will be implemented by the definition of milestones (e.g., for the application of QA/QC measures, the

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delivery of data or the provision of access) and the verification of their achievement by the associated CF units, the Simulation Chamber Committee and the HO, including the SAMU (on an annual basis).

The regular performance assessment of the NFs will be based on objective assessment criteria and related KPIs. A list of preliminary assessment criteria, KPIs and scores to be used in the NF performance assessment is shown in Table 4 (see Annex A). Table 5 (see Annex A) provides preliminary information on the CFs responsible for the evaluation and the weight of each performance criterion in the assessment. More details on the methodology and metrics of KPIs are presented in the milestone document MS26. Specific milestones and numbers for the calculation of scores shall be defined by the associated CF units, in agreement with the RI Com, for each type of NF according to its Certificate of Compliance. The details will be established in the framework of the ACTRIS IMP project.

Annex A: Tables and Templates

А	CTRIS National Facility Application				
	— Observational Platform —				
Name	Name of the Observational Platform (Acronym)				
Host country Host country					
Location Site name, country, latitude and longitude, altitude					
Host institution(s) and PI(s)	Name of RPO Address of RPO Name of PI E-mail of PI (add all responsible RPOs and PIs)				
The Observational Platform is considered to become compliant with the ACTRIS standards for (tick the appropriate boxes)					
 Reactive trace gases in Description of the Observation Describe geography, surroun 					
EMEP) or RIs (e.g., ICOS) and g	goals (max. 10.000 characters)				
ACTRIS instrumentation and List the ACTRIS instruments p to the DC (<i>limited to names as</i>	lanned to be operated and the ACTRIS variables planned to be submitted				
List of instruments: (tick the appropriate boxes)					
List of variables: (tick the appropriate boxes)					
Added-value and auxiliary m	easurements				
List added-value and auxiliary Added-value measurements:	measurements performed at the site (according to D5.1, Chapter 4)				

(tick the appropriate boxes and/or add other measurements if applicable)	(tick t	he appropriate	boxes and/or ad	ld other measurem	ents if applicable)
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Auxiliary measurements:

(tick the appropriate boxes and/or add other measurements if applicable)

Description of the expertise of the RPO(s)

Describe the scientific and technical expertise of the responsible RPO(s) (max. 5.000 characters)

Shall the Observational Platform provide physical access for users?

(tick the appropriate box)

□ Yes

🗆 No

If yes - Description of access capabilities, service provision and demonstrated user interest

Describe qualitatively and quantitatively the access capabilities, ability and heritage of service provision and demonstrated user interest, e.g., by past transnational access records and quantitative impact studies; propose a reasonable, estimated, minimum quantity of access provision per 5-year time period (*max. 10.000 characters*)

Request of operation support by the associated TC and DC units

The list of instruments for which operation support is needed together with the related TC and DC units is generated automatically.

Use the comment box for additional requests.

Table 2: ACTRIS NF Application Form for Atmospheric Simulation Chambers and Laboratory Platforms

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— Exploratory Platform —

Atmospheric Simulation Chamber / Laboratory Platform

Name	Name of the Chamber or Laboratory (Acronym)
Host country	Host country
Location	Site name, country, latitude and longitude
Host institution(s) and PI(s)	Name of RPO Address of RPO Name of PI E-mail of PI (add all responsible RPOs and PIs)

The Exploratory Platform is considered to become compliant with the ACTRIS standards for (tick the appropriate box)

□ Atmospheric Simulation Chamber

□ Laboratory Platform

Description of the Exploratory Platform

Describe the type, instrumentation, aims, scientific role, heritage and goals (max. 10.000 characters)

Description of the expertise of the RPO(s)

Describe the scientific and technical expertise of the responsible RPO(s) (max. 5.000 characters)

Description of access capabilities, service provision and demonstrated user interest

Describe qualitatively and quantitatively the access capabilities (including support and infrastructure), ability and heritage of service provision and demonstrated potential user interest; propose a reasonable, estimated, minimum quantity of access provision per 5-year time period (*max. 10.000 characters*)

Description of access record and performances

Describe qualitatively and quantitatively the access record, e.g., by past transnational access records and quantitative impact studies, and identify the category of access, i.e. excellence driven, need driven, market driven (*max. 5.000 characters*)

Instrumentation and variables

List the instruments planned to be operated and the variables/advanced data products planned to be submitted to the DC

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List of instruments:
List of variables:
List of advanced data products:
(add lines as necessary)
Request of operation support by the associated TC and DC units
Request of operation support by the associated TC and DC units List the instruments for which operation support by TC and DC units is needed (according to the concept document D4.1)
List the instruments for which operation support by TC and DC units is needed (according to the concept
List the instruments for which operation support by TC and DC units is needed (according to the concept document D4.1)
List the instruments for which operation support by TC and DC units is needed (according to the concept document D4.1) Name of DC/TC unit – operation support needed for the following instrument(s):
List the instruments for which operation support by TC and DC units is needed (according to the concept document D4.1) Name of DC/TC unit – operation support needed for the following instrument(s):

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Table 3: ACTRIS NF Application Form for Mobile Platforms

A	CTRIS National Facility Application				
	— Exploratory Platform —				
	Mobile Platform				
Name Name of the Mobile Platform (Acronym)					
Host country Host country					
Host institution(s) and PI(s)	Name of RPO Address of RPO Name of PI E-mail of PI (add all responsible RPOs and PIs)				
The Mobile Platform is consid (tick the appropriate boxes)	dered to contribute to				
 Reactive trace gases r Reactive trace gases i Description of the Mobile Place	<i>n situ</i> measurements				
Describe type, scientific role, l	neritage and goals (max. 10.000 characters)				
ACTRIS instrumentation and a List the ACTRIS instruments pl to the DC (<i>limited to names as</i> List of instruments: (tick the appropriate boxes)	anned to be operated and the ACTRIS variables planned to be submitted				
List of variables:					
(tick the appropriate boxes)					
(tick the appropriate boxes) Added-value and auxiliary me	easurements				
Added-value and auxiliary me	easurements measurements performed with the mobile platform (according to D5.1,				
Added-value and auxiliary me List added-value and auxiliary <i>Chapter 4</i>) Added-value measurements:					

(tick the appropriate boxes and/or add other measurements if applicable)

Description of the expertise of the RPO(s)

Describe the scientific and technical expertise of the responsible RPO(s) (max. 5.000 characters)

Description of access capabilities, service provision and demonstrated user interest

Describe qualitatively and quantitatively the access capabilities, ability and heritage of service provision and demonstrated user interest, e.g., by past transnational access records and quantitative impact studies; propose a reasonable, estimated, minimum quantity of access provision per 5-year time period (*max. 10.000 characters*)

Request of operation support by the associated TC and DC units

The list of instruments for which operation support is needed together with the related TC and DC units is generated automatically.

Use the comment box for additional requests.

Table 4: Preliminary assessment criteria and related KPIs used to evaluate the NF performance (on an annual basis).

Assessment criterion	Key Performance Indicator	Value type	Definition/Calculation of score	Score	
Completeness and timeliness of data delivery	Amount of data submitted to the DC	Quantitative	Number of submitted data sets relative to number of expected data sets	0 1	
	Timeliness of data submission	Quantitative	Data have been submitted in due time	0 or 1	
			Maximum possible score	2	
Amount and quality of access provision (if applicable)	Amount of access provided by the NF	Quantitative	Number of provided access units relative to number of offered access units	0 1	
appreadery	Quality of access provided by the NF	Quantitative	Average score received in user evaluation relative to maximum possible score	0 1	
			Maximum possible score	2	
Regular participation in QA/QC activities	Amount of QA/QC measures applied at instrument/technical level	Quantitative	Number of QA/QC measures applied relative to mandatory number as defined by the associated TC unit(s)	0 1	
	Amount of QA/QC measures applied at data/software level	Quantitative	Number of QA/QC measures applied relative to mandatory number as defined by the associated DC unit(s)	0 1	
			Maximum possible score	2	
Regular participation in ACTRIS meetings	Participation in NF Assembly meetings	Quantitative	Representative of the NF participated in the (annual) NF Assembly meeting	0 or 1	
	Participation in technical workshops	Quantitative	Representative(s) of the NF participated in the (annual) technical workshop	0 or 1	
Maximum possible score					
Completeness and timeliness of reporting	Information of the NF is complete	Quantitative	Requested information of the NF (in the database/web tool) is complete	0 or 1	
	Information provided in due time	Quantitative	Requested information of the NF (in the database/web tool) was provided in due time	0 or 1	
			Maximum possible score	2	

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Table 5: Preliminary assessment criteria, evaluators and weight of the scores (see Table 4) for NF performance assessment. The evaluation is performed by the associated Data Centre (DC) unit(s), the associated Topical Centre (TC) unit(s) and the Head Office (HO).

Observational Platform with access provision			Observational Platform without access provision		
	Evaluator	Weight		Evaluator	Weight
Completeness and timeliness of data delivery	DC/TC	30%	Completeness and timeliness of data delivery	DC/TC	40%
Amount and quality of access provision	HO (SAMU)	20%	Regular participation in QA/QC activities	TC/DC	40%
Regular participation in QA/QC activities	TC/DC	30%	Regular participation in ACTRIS meetings	НО	10%
Regular participation in ACTRIS meetings	НО	10%	Completeness and timeliness of reporting	НО	10%
Completeness and timeliness of reporting	НО	10%			
Exploratory Platform Atmospheric Simulation Chamber or Laboratory Platform		Exploratory Mobile Pl			

Exploratory Platform Atmospheric Simulation Chamber or Laboratory Platform		Exploratory Platform Mobile Platform			
	Evaluator	Weight		Evaluator	Weight
Amount and quality of access provision	HO (SAMU)	40%	Amount and quality of access provision	HO (SAMU)	20%
Completeness and timeliness of data delivery	DC/TC	20%	Completeness and timeliness of data delivery	DC/TC	40%
Regular participation in QA/QC activities	TC/DC	20%	Regular participation in QA/QC activities	TC/DC	20%
Regular participation in ACTRIS meetings	НО	10%	Regular participation in ACTRIS meetings	НО	10%
Completeness and timeliness of reporting	НО	10%	Completeness and timeliness of reporting	НО	10%

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Annex B: Applicable ACTRIS-PPP Documents

ACTRIS Glossary: https://www.actris.eu/About/ACTRIS/ACTRISglossary.aspx

- D1.1: ACTRIS Governance and management structure
- D2.3: ACTRIS Data Policy
- D2.6: ACTRIS Access and Service Policy
- D3.1: ACTRIS Cost Book
- D4.1: Concept document on ACTRIS Central Facilities structure and services
- D4.2: ACTRIS Data Management Plan
- D5.1: Documentation on technical concepts and requirements for ACTRIS Observational Platforms
- D5.2: Documentation on technical concepts and requirements for ACTRIS Exploratory Platforms
- D5.3: Documentation on ACTRIS National Facility labelling principles
- D6.3: Report on access rules and modalities and recommendations for ACTRIS access policy

MS26: Definition of Key Performance Indicators related to ACTRIS service provision