

Integrating Activities for Advanced Communities



D5.1- Virtual Access Assessment Report 1

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PU	Public	X
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the Consortium (including the Commission Services)	
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Publishable Executive Summary

INTERACT is providing free online access to datasets and metadata collected and maintained by infrastructures. In some cases the datasets were already online when project started, however in many cases not and therefore INTERACT's virtual access is first time their datasets are openly accessible online. Virtual access offered during the first half of project period was assessed by the Virtual Access Board, which recommends the continuation of the work on INTERACT VA along the lines of:

1. Emphasising the principles of free and open data, including the IASC principle of ethically open data.
2. Consolidating the current overview of the virtual access.
3. Promoting interoperability at the discovery and data level at the stations through collaborations with existing archives that are adhering to the FAIR guiding principles. This also includes strategic collaboration of the stations with variable oriented Research Infrastructures (e.g. ACTRIS, ICOS etc.) on reporting mechanisms.
4. Emphasising the need for traceable data through application of Persistent Identifiers (e.g. DOI) combined with future utilisation of provenance structures developed through relevant communities in RDA and EU projects (e.g. ENVRIplus and ENVRI-FAIR).

Virtual Access Board acknowledges and strongly recommends INTERACT to continue the data rescue activities described by several stations. These efforts should complement the interoperability efforts by the stations.

1. Background

Virtual Access (VA) is free on-line access to users to datasets and metadata collected and maintained by the infrastructures and will be offered by 29 INTERACT stations. Fifteen research stations have already established open access to their data and provide VA through INTERACT VA single-entry point, and remaining 14 stations will set up their virtual access during the project period with support and guidance by WP 4 Data management and WP5 Trans-national access coordination. INTERACT VA is openly accessible via online single entry point at INTERACT website (<http://www.eu-interact.org/transnational-access/virtual-access/>), where the VA is managed by the partners themselves.

The Virtual Access offered by INTERACT was assessed by Virtual Access Board (VAB) using the periodic report, which was prepared just prior to handing out the materials to VAB, as the main resource by Transnational Office in Oulu. The composition of VAB was set jointly with the WP4 Leader (Data Forum) and it comprises of persons working with data management and thus with full understanding of the challenges of providing online data and opportunities and benefits.

The members of the Virtual Access Board are:

- Øystein Godøy, Norwegian Meteorological Institute, Norway, Chair (WP4 leader)
- Markus Fiebig, Norwegian Institute for air research, Norway, GAW expert through ET-WDC
- Kirsten Elger, Library and Information Services, GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences, Potsdam, Germany

2. Virtual Access Board's assessment report

The INTERACT Virtual Access Board (VAB) has three members and has evaluated the material provided. This includes the periodic report for WP 11 and a presentation of the Greenland Ecosystem Monitoring (GEM) Virtual Access. The periodic report refers to the single entry point for INTERACT Virtual Access (<https://eu-interact.org/accessing-the-arctic/virtual-access/>) which provides a good overview of the current status of virtual access within INTERACT. It is quite evident that the approach to virtual access differs much between the stations that offer such. Harmonisation in the reporting mechanisms (including definitions of terms like visitors/users, sessions etc.) between stations would be beneficial for comparison of the various stations, but also in order to generate a KPI measures for the VA programme within INTERACT.

According to the periodic report, "Virtual Access (VA) means free access to stations' data and databases." This calls for an evaluation of the VA in the context of FAIR guiding principles which are promoted by EU in this context and actively addressed through activities like the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and OpenAire. VAB has evaluated INTERACT in the context of interoperability between data centres which supports the ideas of EOSC and OpenAire. In this

context the current status of VA is a good starting point, but the issue emphasised by the GEM, “Improved sharing through other portals (started)” is important.

VAB would thus recommend INTERACT to continue their work on VA along the lines of:

1. Emphasising the principles of free and open data, including the IASC principle of ethically open data.
2. Consolidating the current overview of the virtual access.
3. Promoting interoperability at the discovery and data level at the stations through collaborations with existing archives that are adhering to the FAIR guiding principles. This also includes strategic collaboration of the stations with variable oriented Research Infrastructures (e.g. ACTRIS, ICOS etc.) on reporting mechanisms.
4. Emphasising the need for traceable data through application of Persistent Identifiers (e.g. DOI) combined with future utilisation of provenance structures developed through relevant communities in RDA and EU projects (e.g. ENVRIplus and ENVRI-FAIR).

The above mentioned elements are also partly covered through the activities of INTERACT WP 4 – the Data Forum. That being said, VAB also acknowledges and strongly recommends to continue the data rescue activities described by several stations. These efforts should at any time complement the interoperability efforts by the stations.