

SUPPORT POLICY FOR CERIC-ERIC USERS

Travel, sample mailing and reimbursement policies and procedures

Amendments

1	(3.b.1) Transportation paragraph update – Km reimbursement	May 2 nd 2022
2	(3.a) – Travel organization - climate conscious travel	May 18 th 2022
3	(8) Addition of article on exceptions and special considerations	June 7 th 2023
4	(3.a.) Deadline to submit access request	June 7 th 2023

Article 1 – SCOPE

This policy establishes the terms and conditions of the user support programme of the Central European Research Infrastructure Consortium (hereinafter CERIC-ERIC or Consortium).

The support programme for Open access users has the scope to enable the mobility of researchers that may otherwise be prevented to travel to CERIC-ERIC Partner Facilities due to lack of resources. As such, it is not intended to cover all the costs associated to research but travel and accommodation, for physical access or in alternative, the costs of sample mailing for remote measurements. The main target of the program are users affiliated to institutions located in low intensity R&D Member States of the European Union or associated countries. However, in case of availability of funding, the support can be extended to all the users' community.

Considering its legal nature, CERIC-ERIC must assure a wise use of its resources. Therefore, travel and sample mail-in expenses must be reasonable and necessary. Users must always use the most cost-effective means of travel and mailing services.

This policy is intended to be comprehensive, however in case of a situation not considered here, please contact useroffice@ceric-eric.eu.

Article 2 – ELIGIBILITY

The conditions for eligibility are the following:

- The proposal is submitted in reply to a call for open access and the peer evaluation by CERIC-ERIC Proposal review panel is positive (score above the threshold for scheduling);
- The support is requested at the moment of the submission of the proposal;
- The user supported has not violated the present policy in the past.

Users' responsibilities

Users are expected to:

1. Exercise good judgment with respect to expenses;
2. Contact the travel office for discussing viable options;

3. Report all expenses promptly and accurately with the required documentation. In cases when supporting documents (receipts, invoices, payment certifications...) are issued on a language different than Italian or English, an explanation of the content should be provided in the Travel reimbursement form, written in English;
4. Always use the most cost-effective means of travel and mailing services;
5. Provide accurate expenses details in the reimbursement form and upload all electronic receipts;
6. Verify that all expenses submitted for reimbursement by the Consortium are valid and conform to this policy;
7. The individual seeking reimbursement is fully accountable and responsible for the request.

Article 3 – MOBILITY SUPPORT

The support covers travel and accommodation expenses for two users, for the period of measurement in a CERIC-ERIC facility as scheduled in the official calendar. It is allowed to request the extension of the support for arriving in place one day prior to the beginning of the measurements, as well as for leaving one day after the end of the measurement, in case the travel arrangements require so (e.g. no transportation available after the closure of the measurements). Users may request, on their own budget, to add days to their stay. Costs derived from the transportation of goods such as equipment, instruments, sample holders, samples, etc. will not be supported.

3.a) Travel organisation

The user should submit, at least three weeks in advance (four weeks in advance in the case of access to JRC - Joint Research Centre laboratories), an access request for **CERIC FUNDED USERS** (<https://vuo.elettra.trieste.it/pls/vuo/iuu.startup>) expressing any preference for the travel arrangements. These will be considered as long as they do not contradict the present policy. Requests received with an anticipation inferior to 21 days (28 days in case of access to JRC laboratories) may be rejected. After approval of the access request by the CERIC user office, CERIC travel office will proceed with the bookings.

Please note that a copy of your ID or passport will be requested for booking purposes.

Once the booking will be finalised, any cost generated by a change in the travel (date, duration...) will be burdened by the user.

In case of cancellation requested by the user for reasons independent from the Consortium, the costs will have to be reimbursed to CERIC-ERIC. Failing to do so will exclude any future possibility for support.

CERIC is committed to the adoption of climate conscious travel, focusing any travel decision considering the safety of our users with a reduction in carbon emissions. Where this is possible, CERIC will endeavour to choose low-carbon travel options.

3.b) Categories of expenses:

3.b.1) Transportation

Will be booked by the travel office, unless otherwise agreed. The following means of transportation are authorized:

- a) Higher classes are authorized only if more economic due to special offers;
- b) Airplane – Economy class; for distances higher than 350 km;
- c) Personal vehicle*, for at least two supported users traveling together;
- d) Other means of transport (ship, urban and suburban buses, trams, metro, etc.).

*The Consortium will award a mileage rate for the authorized use of private vehicle. Current rate is 0.33€/km. Fuel and other expenses directly connected to the private vehicle (insurance etc.) will not be paid.

The following means of transportation shall be specifically approved by the travel office in order to be considered reimbursable:

a) Taxi;

b) Rented vehicles – mid-sized car is allowed. In case of use rented vehicle, the traveller has the right for reimbursement of fuel expenses, parking and highway tolls and second driver, as long as the cost is incurred strictly to work purposes. Car rental can only be allowed for at least two supported users traveling together. In any case the user has to give a deposit by credit card to the car rental to cover unauthorized extra charges. The following extra charges will not be covered:

- I. Extra insurances for reduction or elimination of costs through damage/theft;
- II. Road traffic fine or any other motoring penalty;
- III. Charges for missing fuel after returning the car;
- IV. Charges for one way rentals;
- V. Excess kilometres apart from the direct way;
- VI. Prolongation of rental outside the supported time;
- VII. Any other charges.

The use of taxi and rented vehicles is justified if meeting one or more of these criteria:

- Absence of ordinary means of transport;
- Cost-effectiveness compared to the use of ordinary means of transport. The person concerned must demonstrate such cost-effectiveness, by comparing the total amount of the expenditure that would be incurred (travel expenses and / or lodging) in case of using ordinary means of transport;

3.b.2) Meals

The support provided does not cover the cost of meals.

3.b.3) Accommodation

In principle and whenever possible and convenient the reservations should be made by the Consortium due to negotiated terms and conditions with some local hotels.

3.b.4) Other Highway tolls, fuel (only for a rented vehicle), can be reimbursed, as long as they were incurred wisely and for the only purpose of the measurements.

All invoices, receipts and proofs of payment must be issued in the name of the support's recipient.

Article 4 – SAMPLES' SHIPMENT SUPPORT

For facilities that offer the possibility to perform measurements remotely, in alternative to the mobility support, CERIC may cover the expenses related to the shipment of the necessary samples.

Shipments are allowed from their original location, typically the affiliation of one of the participants, to the CERIC facility in which the measurements will be performed, and back to their original location (if required). The support is limited to up to 5 shipments or an overall cost of 200 Euro.

4.a) Shipment organisation

The user should submit an access request as “**CERIC FUNDED USER**” (<https://vuo.elettra.trieste.it/pls/vuo/iuu.startup>) and, after the approval of the access request, proceed with the booking of the shipment service.

The documents accompanying the samples should indicate clearly whom the local contact is (recipient of the shipment), in the CERIC partner facility.

EU Users

Users sending samples from EU countries should login to VUO and select “Sample shipping” from the “CERIC Access Request” section, fill-in the requested information, select the preferred pick-up time and download the shipment documents that will have to be attached on the parcel(s).

In alternative, you can organise your shipping and ask for reimbursement, submitting a request through VUO.

NON-EU Users

Unfortunately, due to variable customs requirements, our shipment service is not available for extra-EU countries. Users sending samples from non-EU countries are invited to organise the shipment autonomously and subsequently ask for reimbursement, submitting a request through VUO.

Article 5 – DOCUMENTATION OF EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENT

Travel expenses are reimbursable when the location of departure coincides with the place of employment, as declared in the VUO. In any other cases, travel expenses will be refunded if the travel solutions adopted by the user are cheaper than the ones proposed by the travel office and the difference in the place of departure or arrival can be duly justified. It will be up to the traveller to provide the necessary evidence. For every expense claimed for reimbursement, there should be, attached to the reimbursement form, **original** supporting documents such as itemized receipts, invoices or other valid fiscal document. The receipt must identify the name of establishment, date, actual amount incurred, description, and receipt of payment.

All the documents should be suitable for tax purposes and may include the invoice or the receipt in accordance with local regulations in force in the respective countries. For taxi fares, in the absence of a cash receipt, the documentation should contain the date, the identification of the taxi, the amount paid and the signature of the driver.

Claims without receipts must be detailed explained indicating the circumstances for which the expense is not documented. This kind of expense can result in additional tax implications.

All the fiscal documentation written in a language other than English or Italian, must be accompanied by a courtesy translation, declaring the type of goods acquired and decoding the essential elements of the charges.

All invoices, receipts and proofs of payment must be issued in the name of the support’s recipient.

Reimbursement procedure

1) After finishing the experiment and completing the CERIC user survey, the user has to fill in a reimbursement form, available in the VUO, in the section "CERIC proposal submission".

2) The **original receipts**, if not electronic, should be sent to the CERIC travel office:

CERIC-ERIC

Attn. Travel Office

Strada Statale 14 - km 163,5 in AREA Science Park

34149 Basovizza, Trieste ITALY

Article 6 – EXPENSES INCURRED IN FOREIGN CURRENCY

For the reimbursement of expenses incurred in foreign currency, the official exchange rate of the day of the expenditure will be applied. The exchange rate adopted is the one from the Bank of Italy.

Article 7 – DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING THE REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST, PROCESSING THE REQUEST AND PAYING THE ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Any reimbursement request should be submitted within 60 days from the end of the experiment. Exceptions must be reasonably justified. The reimbursement request will be processed within maximum 60 days after the receipt of the complete documentation and will be paid in Euro by bank transfer, to the bank account declared by the user.

Article 8 – EXCEPTIONS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Exceptions to the present policy may be warranted under special circumstances related to health and disability. Any deviations from the above-mentioned travel regulations shall be decided on a case-by-case basis by the User Office after discussion with the Travel Office and must be agreed in writing to the user.

Users who require special arrangements for reasons of health or disability may seek reasonable exceptions to this policy. Such health condition or disability must be confirmed in writing by a competent medical authority.