

ITACA·SB

Potentiating the Italian Capacity for Structural Biology Services in Instruct-ERIC



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1st Call for Transnational Access (TNA) @ National Research Council

– Guidelines –

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1. Definitions

Transnational Access (TNA): the provision of access to instrumentation and/or services offered by the ITACA.SB research infrastructure, without geographical restrictions, enabling researchers from different locations to utilize its resources.

Operative Unit (O.U.) or Facility: a constituent entity of the Research Infrastructure, along with its associated services, typically situated at a single physical location. An operative unit may encompass one or multiple pieces of equipment.

Service coordinator: the designated individual responsible for managing all aspects of ITACA.SB services and Transnational Access (TNA) activities within the operative unit.

TNA activity: the execution of a granted TNA proposal at a facility within the project, which can involve either physical access or remote service.

Equipment: scientific instruments located at the operative units to which Applicants/Users apply for access.

Installation/Laboratory: physical location where equipment associated with operative units are housed and where TNA activities take place.

Physical access: TNA activity where the Users physically visit the U.O. to perform sample analysis.

Remote service: TNA activity where the Users benefit from services, such as sample analysis performed by the operator at the facility or computational services accessed remotely.

Applicant/User: individuals who apply for the proposed research activity, which can be conducted using the selected equipment at the hosting facility or via remote service. Eligible individuals include, but are not limited to, researchers, technical staff, and PhD students actively participating in research within the framework of their studies.

User Access Agreement: the agreement signed between the research infrastructure and the Users under a single approved TNA project, encompassing all aspects of service provision and regulations.

Review panel: an advisory panel of experts selected to evaluate the technical feasibility and scientific quality of proposals received.

2. Introduction

The Italian nationally distributed **ITACA.SB Research Infrastructure**, funded by the European Union's *NextGenerationEU* under the MUR call 3264/2021 PNRR M4/C2/L3.1.1, is committed to supporting researchers by providing free access to cutting-edge technologies and expertise in the field of structural biology, including protein production, biophysics, mass spectrometry, high-throughput screening, BioSAXS, cryo-EM, and high-performance computing.

3. Modality of access

The general TNA programme provides two means of access: physical and remote.

Physical access can be defined as the hands-on access of any User, i.e., the Users physically visit the O.U. and use its laboratories and equipment.

Remote access can be defined as the non-physical access to the services of the O.U.. There are two modalities of remote access:

- a. shipping of biological materials, to be handled and analysed by the personnel at the O.U. according to the Users' requests and/or instructions;
- b. use of IT computational services made available by the O.U. and usable via remote internet connection through private credentials.

Access to the services and resources provided by the ITACA.SB platforms is strictly subject to prior acceptance of the ITACA.SB Terms of Use, Acceptable Use Policy, and Privacy policy for ITACA.SB Services. Accordingly, a user access agreement will be made between the parties.

4. Eligibility

The hereby call applies the following criteria:

- Applicants must be affiliated with institutions that are not part of the ITACA.SB initiative. Accordingly, applicants' proposals from Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR) and University of Florence are not eligible;

- Applicants (doctoral students, postdocs, researchers, staff scientists or P.I.) must be affiliated to a recognized academic or research institutions;
- Master or bachelor students are not eligible;
- Applicants must have an active contract with their home institution for the entire duration of the access period;
- Applicants must have complete support and validation of their home institution, responsible for the service agreement;
- Only proposals submitted before the call deadline will be accepted.

Moreover:

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the Operative Units for technical verification and feasibility of their proposals before ahead application.
- Applications will be assessed based on technical feasibility and scientific quality
- All data obtained during the TOA should be Open Access.

5. Operative Units involved and services available

This TNA programme provides access to CNR instrumentation hosted at the following ITACA.SB Operative Units:

- CNR-IC Bari, services coordinator: Dr. Cinzia Giannini
- CNR-IC URT Caserta, services coordinator: Dr. Michele Saviano
- CNR-ICB Catania, services coordinator: Dr. Nicola D'Antona
- CNR-IBPM Rome, services coordinator: Dr. Andrea Ilari

All services offered by ITACA.SB are listed in the service catalogue available on the following webpage: <https://www.itaca-sb.it/tna/> (Annex I – Service Catalogue).

6. Application process

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis until the available budget is fully allocated.

Users are required to select the service they wish to request access to by clicking on the relevant service listed on the official webpage (<https://www.itaca-sb.it/tna/>). Subsequently, they must complete all mandatory fields in the application form and finalize the request by clicking the 'Submit' button.

Please note: fields marked with the symbol ‘**’ are mandatory.

7. Evaluation procedure

Proposals will undergo a two-step evaluation process, focusing first on technical feasibility and then on scientific quality.

Initially, a review panel composed of experts in the required technique will assess whether the proposed work is technically achievable, considering the availability of resources, compatibility with existing infrastructure, and overall feasibility of execution. If the application meets the technical requirements, it will then proceed to a scientific evaluation, where the panel will evaluate the originality, methodological soundness, and potential impact of the proposal.

Only proposals that successfully pass both evaluations will be granted access.

Accepted projects **must** be finalized by June 30th, 2026.

8. User responsibilities

Upon approval of the TNA access, the User is required to adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and Terms of Use (ToU). Conformity to this plan is an integral part of the User Access Agreement signed between the User and the Access provider.

Within 7 days from the notification that the project is granted access, the User must sign the

User Access Agreement with the host facility. After completing the project, the User is required to provide the TNA activity report within 3 weeks after the end of the access period.

9. Confidentiality of personal data

All personal data collected from the User during the application process are only used for the operational management of TNA activities and the proper performance of its legal tasks and duties for communication and research, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR – Regulation (EU) 2016/679). No personal data is shared with the external review panel during the review phase, nor will personal data be rented, sold, or otherwise shared with or provided to third parties other than for reporting purposes. Applicants are requested to review and consent to the above-mentioned privacy policy upon application. The processing of personal data is governed by the CNR privacy policies.

10. Dissemination of results

ITACA.SB follows the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) and Open Access principles, as suggested by the European Commission. All projects receiving either direct or indirect *NextGenerationEU* funding are required to make sure that any peer-reviewed journal article they publish is openly accessible, free of charge.

Scientific research data, which is the data underlying publications, should be open accessible when there is no case of conflicts of interest regarding commercialization of the scientific information, Intellectual Property Rights, privacy concerns and security.

11. Acknowledgments

If you benefit from the services provided by **ITACA.SB**, please acknowledge the project in your publications using the following sentence:

“Potentiating the Italian Capacity for Structural Biology Services in Instruct-ERIC”, acronym “ITACA.SB” (Project No. IR0000009, CUP B53C22001790006), funded by the European Union’s NextGenerationEU under the MUR call 3264/2021 PNRR M4/C2/L3.1.1

Kindly notify ITACA.SB as soon as the publication becomes available.

For any additional information or matters not explicitly stated in this document, please contact ITACA.SB via email at info@itaca-sb.it.