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Deliverable report

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SECOND REPORT ON THE USE OF THE OBSERVATORY

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0.1	24.01.2017	First draft	Maro Androutsopoulou, Vasilis Bonis
0.2	18.05.2018	Updated version	Maro Androutsopoulou, Vasilis Bonis

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The RIs Observatory is the single entry point for information on Research Infrastructures. The National Contact Points for H2020-RI programme gather, organise and provide access to information on RI projects, transnational access opportunities, policy issues, stakeholders, national and regional initiatives on RIs, etc. The information covers all countries and all thematic fields.

Researchers, policy makers and National Contact Points of other H2020 programmes can stay up to date with latest development on RIs, search information based on own interests, discover snapshot-reports, explore RIs per country or thematic field, investigate collaboration networks and map projects and policies across Europe.

The Observatory was initiated under EuroRIs-Net+ project (FP7-283663). It has been further developed and is currently supported by H2020-RICH 646713. During the 36-month period, priority was given to revising the structure/sections, cleaning and updating the content, cross-checking the reliability of the content and engaging the NCP community to maintaining/using the tool.

Most of the challenges described on the First Report were solved and the observatory and the visualizations based on it are on line. Therefore, the dissemination of the Observatory to the wider public has begun, but still the current use has been rather low. Nonetheless, the goal of making the Observatory a useful tool for the daily work of National Contact Points and RI stakeholders has been achieved.

2. WORK PROGRESS & STATISTICS

During the 18-month period (01.07.2016-30.12.2017), the RICH2020 RI's Observatory has been upgraded by working in both the available data and the system itself. The data, which was derived from the EC portal, has been checked for consistency and completeness in comparison with new source data that have been acquired in this time period from all partners of the consortium. This process has been carried out through a stepwise editing of data by using the database's RDBMS, a series of SQL queries and the Observatory's existing web forms.

In the case that data are collected in bulk by individual sources, an import functionality has been implemented and it is currently being updated in order to correct and improve workflow issues. This functionality lets the user import data in the form of a Microsoft Excel file. The file's structure is dictated by a template which includes all main data entities that are maintained by the Observatory and their corresponding fields. The file can contain both new and existing records if editing of records is deemed necessary. Since the Excel file is filled by the user by using a third party tool, the full validation rules of the web forms cannot be applied. To counter this issue, detailed instructions are provided on how to fill in the file so as to avoid having to deal with erroneous information.

The quality of data (regardless of the source) is maintained by using embedded validation rules and by deduplication processes. The validation rules check the content for consistency (e.g. the start date should always be before the end date), format (numeric fields accept only numeric values) and form (e.g. URL fields must contain valid URLs). The inherent difficulties of identifying duplicate records dictate the tools used for the deduplication processes. The database's RDBMS is used for both locating and deleting or merging duplicate values.

Information on the country level can be exported as a printable report (PDF file). The user can review the data related to a specific country by using the "Search a country" functionality in the home page.

RIs in Austria (MERIL)

18 RIs
Austro-Czech RERI-uasb NMR Center
BOKU-VIBT Imaging-Center
Campus Science Support Facilities GmbH
Centre for Surfaces and Nanoanalytics
Conrad Observatorium [Conrad Observatory]
Core Facility Cellular Analysis
Core Facility Electron Microscopy
Institut für Corpuslinguistik und Texttechnologie (ICLTT) - Corpuscluster
Large Scale Multiprocessor (SGI Altix UltraViolet 1000)
MedAustron
Multipurpose Analytical Electron Microscope JEM-2800
Phonogrammarchiv [Audio-Visual Research Archive]
Röntgenzentrum [X-Ray Center Core Facility]
Universitäre Service-Einrichtung für Transmissionselektronenmikroskopie (USTEM) Core Facility
VetCore - Facility for Research
Vienna Drosophila RNAi Center
Vienna Scientific Cluster
Vienna Environmental Research Accelerator

Persons from Austria

3 Permanent Representation (EC)	Martin Schmid EISNER Christian NEYER Sabine
3 Programme Committee members	Buck Susanne Halver Manfred Harjung Margit
2 RI NCP Network Members	Halver Manfred van der Zee Marit
1 e-IRG (e-Infrastructures Reflection Group)	Kuhn Dietmar

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Image 1. The Country page

If the user is logged in, the contents of the page can be exported to a PDF file. The file contains the same information that the page contains, i.e. organisation units, projects for which the country is the coordinator (FP7 and H2020), projects for which the country is a partner (FP7 and H2020), H2020 projects' budget, national roadmaps and Ris.
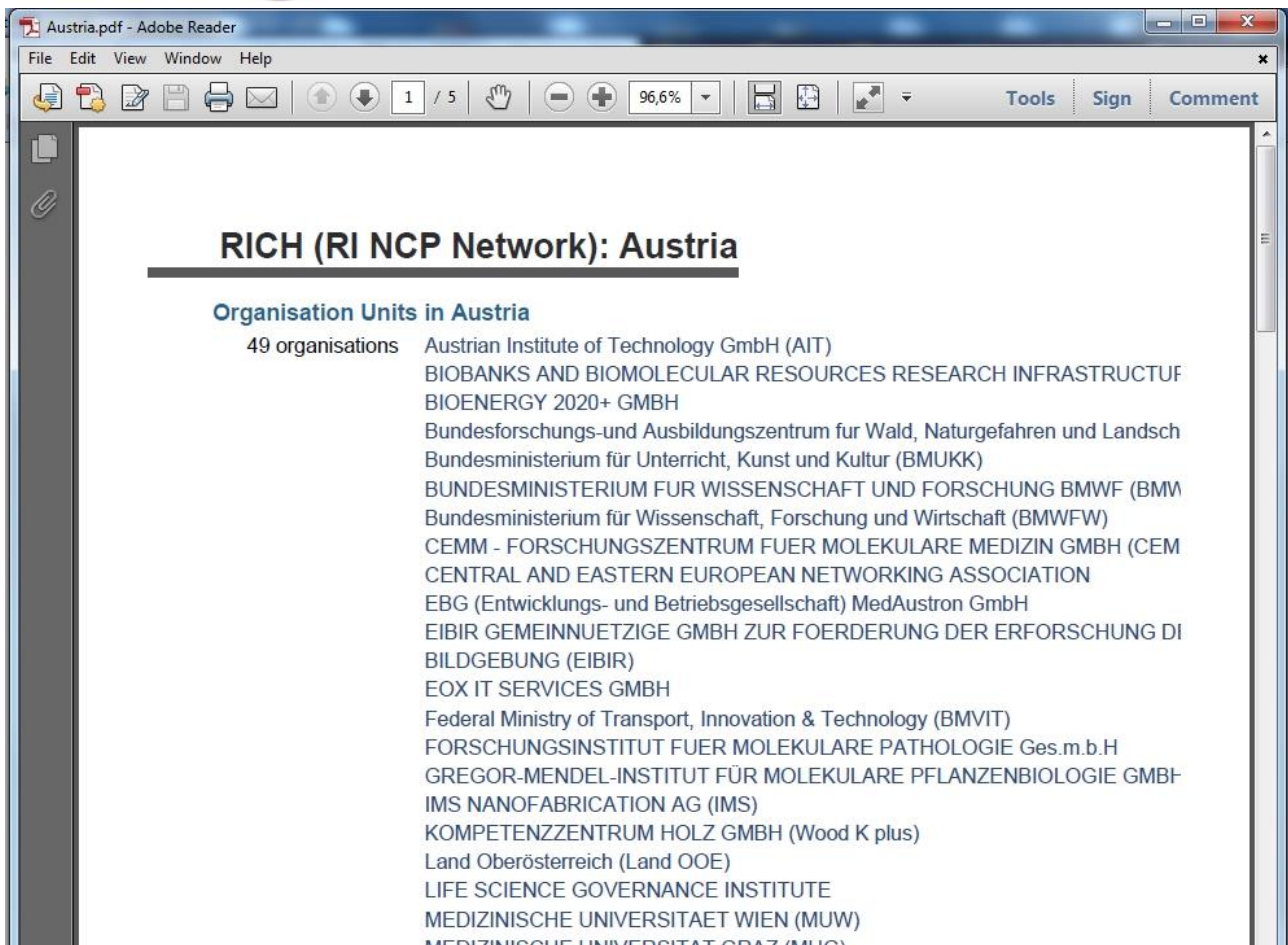
Image 2. PDF export of the country page

One of the main updates that were integrated to the Observatory was the new visualization's tool. The tool is an independent software entity that works outside of and in tandem with the RICH Observatory. This means that in order to provide the tool's functionality to the end user the processes of installing, parameterizing and testing the tool itself outside the context of the RICH Observatory should first be carried out. Security tests were also carried out by the system administrators (EKT's Network operations center personnel) as a standard process whenever a new system is installed.

After the conclusion of the aforementioned processes the integration of the visualization tool to the RICH observatory page followed. This included the creation of a dedicated page that would host the tool's user interface and the existing visualization page was changed to include a link to the tool's page.

In the context of updating the graphic layout a new header, search and footer sections, new color scheme and structure were added to the "homepage" of the observatory, as well as the visualizations page (images 1, 2 and 3).

In one of the forthcoming consortium meetings, all partners will discuss the sections that the observatory includes and will decide on any additional changes that will be implemented shortly in order for the dessemination campaing to include the updated and final observatory and menu.
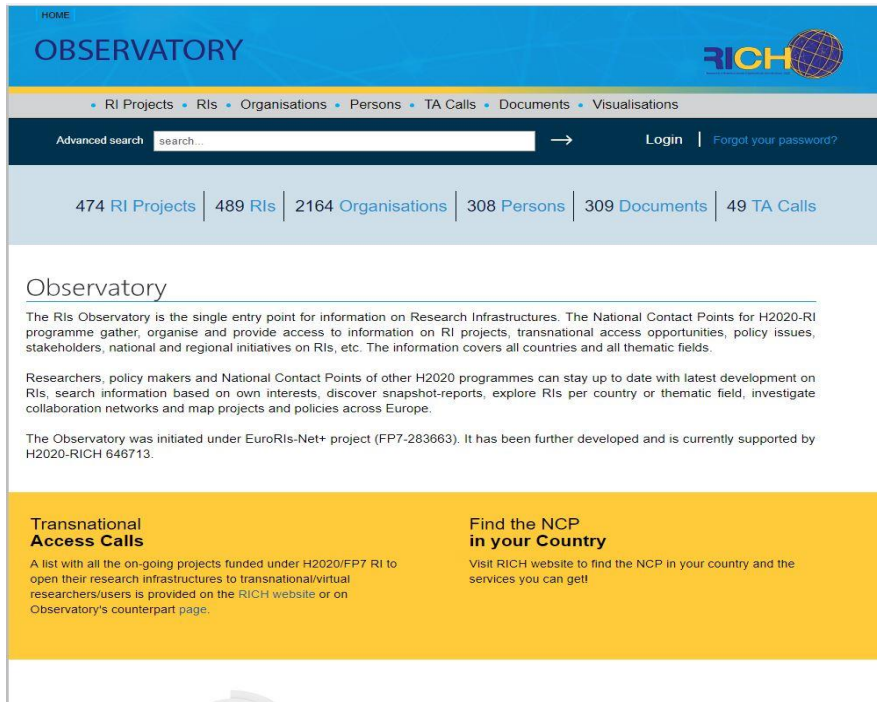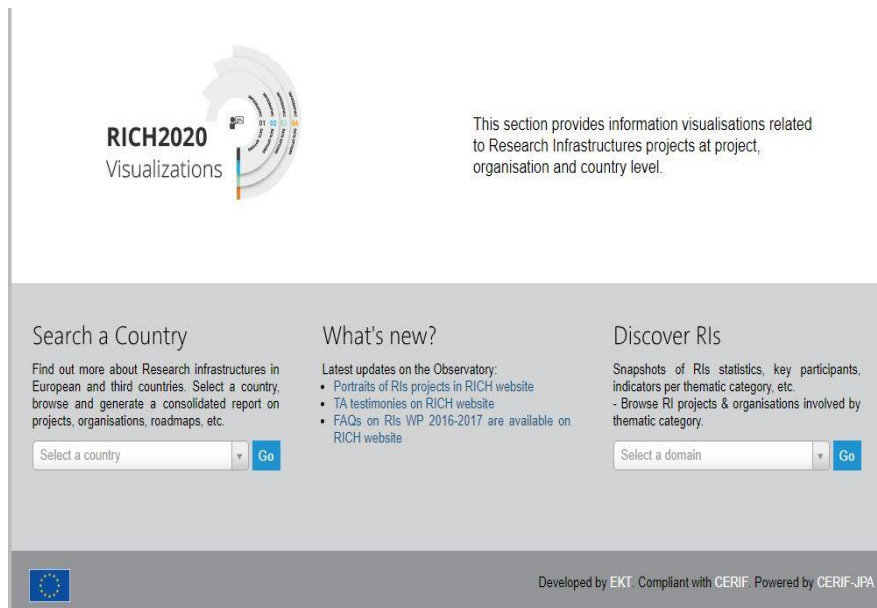
Image 3. New observatory home page
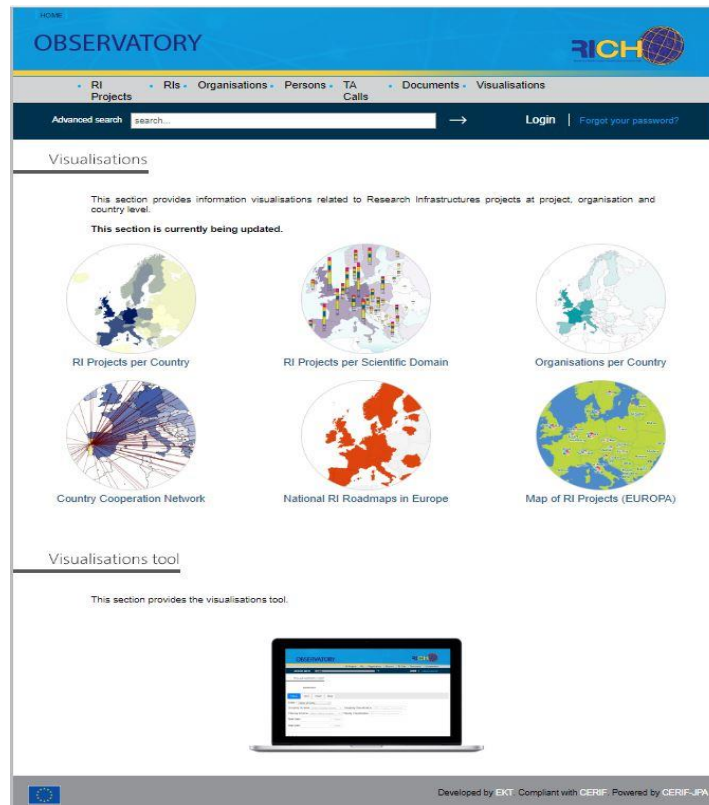

Image 4 Bottom part of the home page

Image 5. Visualizations

EKTs communication team also produced a template for the website and proposed different layout versions for all website sections, including RICH2020 tweeter. Quite a few meetings and emails were exchanged with the consorium that resulted in a few changes in the layout in order to produce the final website mockups. The code development stage involved several steps, such as identifying in the code the areas where the changes will take place, the implementation of these changes, the tests for each change and what can affect the application's layout and final testing in the development environment for the production stage. After the conclusion of all tests the new version of the system was deployed as a production version (image 4).

Through the new layout, the Obserbvatory is promoted and is easily accessible.

Image 6. "New" Website

3. THE OBSERVATORY IN NUMBERS

The number of single users and number of visits of the observatory is as follows:

	Single users	Number of visits
18-month-period (01.07.2016- 30.12.2017)	16.909	20.972

The MERIL-2 project foresees the exchange of data with web based platforms of related themes. To this end, the RICH2020 can provide data in a specific format (XML and/or JSON) through systemic communication pipelines, i.e. APIs and web services. Since the data model that both systems use is based on CERIF, the CERIF API is a prime candidate for this purpose.

In the following months an attempt will also be performed to connect the TAS section with Euraxess, in order for TAS Opportunities to be hosted through an xml schema from the observatory data.

The opportunity for the next period is to increase the use of the Observatory, through the targeted dissemination to groups of particular interest, such as:

- ESFRI and e-IRG members,
- RI Programme Committee members,
- Beneficiaries of RI projects and national stakeholders
- MERIL National Data Intermediaries, etc.

A dissemination campaign will be finalized and will be put in action.

4. VISUALIZATION TOOL

As stated in the home page of the Observatory, it is the single entry point for information on Research Infrastructures. In order to be more attractive but give all the necessary information the visitor may seek at the same time, except from the visualizations that have been developed and depict certain data and information, a visualization tool was developed.

This tool provides to the end user the ability to correlate, filter, group, and process informational entities within the RICH database in order to produce charts, maps (if geographical data are chosen), to export Microsoft Excel files as reports that include the results and to export Adobe PDF files that include the result data and the produced visualization itself. The development of the visualization tool took into consideration the structure and characteristics of the database and the possible user needs that should be facilitated. A partitioned architecture was adopted so as to achieve system transparency and reusability. This decision translated into the production of two new software systems, a back-end system that collects user requests (in this case system requests since the users themselves cannot make direct requests to the back-end) and produces the needed responses and a front-end that provides the user interface to the end user.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The deviation from the initial plan for immediate relaunch of the Observatory is justified by the need for reliable, cross-checked data. In collaboration with the consortium partners that are responsible for Communication and Dissemination issues, a concrete plan will be set to promote it through the project website, the NCPs' websites, the EC and respective press releases.

Finally, in order to maximise visibility and have more reliable visualizations, the data used in the observatory will be downloaded again from EC and will be loaded after a quality check automatically, through a new function currently developed, by end of July 2018.