



Fakulteta za kmetijstvo  
in biosistemske vede

Pivoča 10  
2311 Hoče, Slovenija

The Senate of the Faculty of Agriculture and Life Sciences adopted the resolution below based on the UM research Open-Access Policy, approved at the 14th regular senate session of the University of Maribor held on 24 November 2020, by Decision No 030/2020/78/515-MP. FALS held its 31st regular senate session on 20 June 2022.

## **POLICY ON OPEN-ACCESS RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE AT THE FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF MARIBOR**

### **1 DEFINITION**

The Research Infrastructure at the Faculty of Agriculture and Life Sciences (hereinafter referred to as RI FALS), in accordance with the Policy on Open-Access Research Infrastructure of the University of Maribor (PODRI UM), consists of premises, research equipment, databases, research groups, a piggery, a poultry testing station, plant collections, gene and seed banks, areas for sustainable multi-year experiments in agriculture, grassland, fruit growing and viticulture carried out outdoors and indoors. It also includes the infrastructure of the University Agricultural Centre (UAC UM) and the Botanical Garden, which are part of the Faculty of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

### **2 RESEARCH UNITS AT FALS**

The research units at FALS consist of laboratories and plant science collections. The heads of the laboratories, genebanks and the UM Botanical Garden are also the contact correspondents at each unit.

### **3 USERS**

The RI FALS is publicly accessible to researchers, research groups or research organisations within the research activities of UM (employees, researchers, technicians) and to research activities outside UM (external users, i.e. researchers from other research organisations, from collaborating industrial companies and other users).

In RI external use, FALS requires proof of knowledge and skills necessary to use the RI. If the external user does not have the required knowledge and skills to use the RI in a professional manner, FALS may offer a comprehensive service where the work on the RI is carried out by trained employees. FALS can also offer and provide training for new external users. The cost of such training is borne by the external user.

<sup>1</sup>V skladu z opredelitvijo Evropskega strateškega foruma za raziskovalne infrastrukture (ESFRI) so raziskovalne infrastrukture (RI) zmožljivosti, sredstva ali storitve, ki predstavljajo večjo opremo ali nabor instrumentov in predstavljajo oz. dopolnjujejo vire znanja, kot so zbirke, arhivi in podatkovne baze.

## **4 ACCESS**

Access means the legitimate and authorised way in which users can participate in and use the RI and services. RI may be accessible in laboratories, outdoors, and also in the form of plants and test animals. In the case of portable or partly portable equipment, the responsible laboratories shall define the necessary security measures. Experiments at UAC UM are carried out on designated agricultural land (arable land, meadows, permanent crops, forest), in stables and in the Botanical Garden.

When participating in and using the RI, users must comply with the relevant principles, strategies, and laboratory rules and instructions regarding the use of the equipment.

The needs of access may be research, commercial or both. In the case of research access, it is subject to scientific excellence, originality, quality, technical feasibility and compliance with ethical considerations. Market-oriented access, which implies a performance fee or access fee, is possible based on an agreement between the external user and the FALS RI manager. Both modalities shall be approved based on an internal assessment or peer review of the application.

FALS is responsible for determining the amount of its own RI available to external users under clear, transparent and fair conditions.

The access unit for each RI is clearly defined within the laboratories. FALS defines the extent of access the users can have, which is measured in access units such as hours of usage during complex experiments and others. The amount of plant material (seeds, seedlings, plants) from the scientific plant collection available to users is limited and is determined according to the size of the plant taxonomy collection.

Procedures and collaborations related to access of the RI, may vary according to the different types of RI within each entity (e.g. negotiation, evaluation, etc.), but decisions on request access to users should be clear and justified.

## **5 COSTS AND FEES**

Access to the RI may be free of charge or subject to a fee. All conditions related to the use of the RI are transparent for all users and publicly available at the UM and FALS websites under the UM Research Infrastructure Database (UM RID). In case of paid access, a fee will be charged to the user according to usage of the RI. In those cases, FALS laboratories provide:

- traceability of the work carried out on a given RI unit (usage data), including the keeping appropriate records of access requests (successful and unsuccessful, and reasons for denial of access);
- compliance with the prohibition of double funding
- verifiability
- compliance with all relevant national, EU and competition law funding conditions

Market-oriented access charges are the same as full commercial prices.

The unit cost depends on the amount of use of a particular access unit.

When working at UAC UM, it is necessary to define the costs in terms of any damage caused by access to the plot, such as reduction in yield. Costs shall also be identified for any inability to use the plot for a given period as a consequence of the experiment carried out.

Plant material (seeds, seedlings, plants) from the scientific plant collection used for research or educational purposes may be obtained free of charge.

## **6 RESTRICTIONS**

Certain RI may also be for the exclusively used by FALS, and this is made clear to all potential users.

Access to the RI may be restricted by national security and defence, privacy and confidentiality, commercial sensitivity, intellectual property rights, ethical considerations and other compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

## **7 EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

As part of the open access policy for RI, we encourage collaboration with other institutions and organisations that need the RI for their research, education and training. In accordance with the Open Access Policy and in accordance with its resources, RI and the RI using researchers at FALS can educate pre-school, school and university students and train users from other institutions, organisations, companies or citizens. The RI is a setting for demonstrations on agricultural production and other procedures required by national or European legislation. The RI also has an important ecological function (preservation of biodiversity), a social function (tourism, recreational services) and a cultural function (exhibition collection of the Archaeological Park, Meranovo).

## **8 ETHICAL CONDUCT, RESEARCH INTEGRITY, NON-DISCRIMINATION AND TRANSPARENCY**

The open access policy on RI is in line with the Code of Ethical Conduct of the University of Maribor. FALS laboratories strictly adheres to the eight basic principles by which researchers must conduct themselves: honesty in communication, reliability in the conduct of research, objectivity, impartiality and independence, openness and accessibility, duty of care, honesty in the citation of references and merits, and responsibility towards future scientists and researchers.

## **9 QUALITY OF OPEN ACCESS**

In the context of quality assurance of open access to the RI, mechanisms will be used to assess the quality of access. These mechanisms will follow the general indicators defined by the European Commission, RACER (Relevant, Accepted, Credible, Easy, Robust):

- Relevance and close link to the objectives set. Mechanisms must not be overly ambitious and must measure the right elements.
- Acceptance by RI and stakeholders. The roles and responsibilities for the indicator should be well defined.

- Credibility for non-experts, unambiguity and easy interpretation. Indicators should be as simple and robust as possible.
- Ease of monitoring, low cost and low effort.
- Stability in cases of manipulation attempts.

## 10 RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT

The data management policy follows the FAIR principles (Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability and Reusability). Each RI entity has data management systems and guidelines in place which provide clear instructions on how and where to store the resulting data for a reasonable period of time and how these data can be offered for reuse.

The management of research data generated via RI use, shall be defined at the time of agreement conclusion on the use of the RI.

## 11 FALS CONTACT

The FALS contact person for equipment use is Rosvita Ferčal, email: [rosvita.fercal@um.si](mailto:rosvita.fercal@um.si), phone: 02/320 90 55.

**Dean of the Faculty:**  
**Prof. Dr. Branko Kramberger**

