

The EROHS (European Resource Observatory for the Humanities and Social Sciences) project

1. Short description of the project and main characteristics

The purpose of EROHS is to create a coherent, comprehensive and integrated observatory that is unrivalled in the world – 'the dream machine' of the humanities and social sciences – with a view to guarantee the existence, accessibility and comparability of data at a European level. This should be organized as a physical centre, the hub, with sufficient leverage in scientific, administrative, technical and economic terms to set priorities, ensure the scientific quality of the schemes and have the authority to back its decisions. The hub will have the competence to appoint a number of related nodes on the basis of excellence and through a process of open competition. Through the nodes, a collection of sub-observatories will thus be distributed across Europe, building on existing units of expertise. These may be discipline, subject or theme-specific.

2. Science case (scientific justification, including new areas to be opened)

EROHS promises to strengthen interdisciplinary and cross-border collaboration and comparative research on a European dimension. Further, it will enhance the building of Research Infrastructure capacities in the less-resourced European countries of today. Finally, it will increase the opportunity to improve knowledge on social processes and thus holds great potential in terms of advising European and national policy-makers on how to manage the challenges currently faced by the societies of Europe.

3. Impact to society and to new technologies for industry

EROHS will facilitate new knowledge in the following ways:

- The environment of improved and new data will also facilitate the generation of new research agendas and questions that cannot be addressed today.
- The existence, accessibility and comparability of European data will be the defining element of the Europeanization and internationalisation of the humanities and social sciences and the structuring of the disciplines at the European level.
- The existence, accessibility and comparability of European data for the social sciences and the humanities increases the opportunity to improve knowledge on social processes.

4. Strategic importance to ERA

Europe has the potential to become a natural laboratory for the social sciences and the humanities with the provision of data with an optimal combination of diversity and homogeneity – and certainly much more than is the case within each nation-state. Europe could constitute a world-leading 'best case' for research in the humanities and social sciences. Equally, both disciplines can further thrive on the massive wealth of data on demographic, societal, constitutional, institutional, political, legal, economical, cultural, linguistic, religious, and historical variations in Europe.

5. Maturity of proposal

EROHS exists as a draft proposal from the ESFRI working group on Research Infrastructures in the Humanities and the Social Sciences.

6. Budgetary information (design, preparation, construction and operation costs)

Construction costs are estimated to €27.5 million over two years. The budget is calculated on the other hand by extrapolating from similar national efforts in the humanities and social sciences on the one hand and, by taking into consideration the costing of the Council for European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA), European Social Survey (ESS) and the Global Diversity Information Facility (GBIF).