Project Proposal: ST4RIs - Strengthening and Training for Research Infrastructure Staff

Summary:

This project responds directly to the Horizon Europe call for the *Training and up-skilling of research infrastructures technical staff*, by developing and implementing a coherent, cross-infrastructure training framework tailored to the evolving needs of technical personnel in European Research Infrastructures in the environmental domain (ENVRIs), and going beyond that, towards other domains as well. Recognising that technical staff are vital for ensuring the reliability, innovation, and sustainability of operations at RIs, the project will prioritise the co-design and delivery of targeted training activities that are both practical and future-oriented, and also specific for the distributed and central components of the RIs.

The project will encompass a comprehensive assessment of needed skills (both current and future) in different career paths, mapping of existing training offers across participating RIs, and a gap analysis to identify skill areas that remain underserved. Based on this foundation, existing training possibilities will be harvested, categorised and catalogued (see STARIs Galaxy), while lacking training opportunities specific for RIs will be co-developed with RI experts, covering both generic and infrastructure-specific competencies—from data handling and instrumentation to AI, FAIR data practices, quality assurance, and interoperability across disciplines. These training opportunities will be designed in multiple formats (online, hybrid, and hands-on) to accommodate diverse learning needs and work contexts and will be continuously adapted in response to feedback from the technical staff themselves.

At the same time, the project will establish clear and flexible career development pathways for RI technical personnel. By identifying role-specific skills and responsibilities, the framework will help align training efforts with real career progression opportunities. These pathways will not only guide individual learning journeys but also support human resource planning within RIs. To ensure that skills and knowledge are formally recognised, the project will introduce a structured certification approach. This will include the development of an "ST4RIS *Certificate"*, based on existing standards where possible, and tailored to RI roles. Certificates will be digitally issued to support visibility, portability, and long-term recognition across institutional and national borders.

To facilitate access to the training programme, a digital entry point—*STARIs Galaxy*—will be developed as a user-friendly interface where technical staff can explore and navigate available training offers, career guidance, and certification information. The platform will be designed around user requirements and include light gamification features to enhance engagement and

motivation, but its core purpose will be to serve as an intuitive access and coordination tool for the training ecosystem, not as a training platform in itself.

Crucially, the entire process will be co-designed across multiple RIs, ensuring shared ownership and long-term sustainability of the training framework. This collaborative approach will promote harmonisation of skill requirements, support interoperability among infrastructures, and help build a resilient, competent technical workforce able to respond to scientific and societal challenges. By empowering RI technical staff through structured, recognised, and accessible training, the project will significantly enhance the operational excellence and future readiness of the European research infrastructure landscape.

Expected Impact

This project will deliver a coherent, user-driven training system to empower the technical backbone of European RIs. By strengthening the skills and career perspectives of technical staff, it supports operational excellence, cross-infrastructure interoperability, and long-term sustainability of the European RI landscape. Through recognised certification and accessible entry points, the project sets a new standard for up-skilling across the RI domain.

Participants:
- UH (Finland, coordination)
- UFZ (Germany)
- SLU (Sweden)
- EAA (Austria)
- MUNI (Czech republic)
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- ERIC 2
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