

EOSC

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Commission, with the support of the EU Member States rapidly put in place in April its ERAvsCORONA Action Plan, containing 10 key areas for coordinated R&I actions. One key action in the ERAvsCORONA Action Plan involved the setting up of a data-sharing platform on the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the COVID-19 disease, as a priority pilot of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC).

The European COVID-19 Data Platform, a joint effort by the European Commission, the European Bioinformatics Institute of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory, ELIXIR and Member States, provides open access to over 2 million records of heterogeneous data types. Its development is supported by existing Horizon 2020 projects. Additional top-up funding specifically aims to mobilise viral genomes from national sequencing efforts in Europe and beyond for the surveillance of variants. These activities include establishing submission workflows at the source (in the sequencing labs and/or bioinformatics facilities) to ENA and improving support and helpdesk services to data submitters.

In line with our Open Science policies, a strong focus is placed on ensuring that the data discoverable through the platform are as FAIR - Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable - and as open as possible, facilitating researchers' unimpeded and fast access to data, allowing them to build on each other's research and to extract key findings from an interconnected pool of data.

An important contribution to data governance by the European COVID-19 Data Platform is delivered through one of its main components: The Federated European Genome-phenome Archive (FEGA). FEAGA provides a secure controlled access service for sensitive human data (genomic data from human research subjects as well as sensitive clinical and epidemiological data). FEAGA is the distributed solution for data that cannot freely move across borders.

An emergency Work Programme under Horizon Europe is evaluating proposals for a dedicated topic that will further contribute to the development and growth of the European COVID-19 Data Platform.

Additionally, under the Research Infrastructures part of the Horizon Europe Work Programme, a topic is foreseen for 2021 under Destination INFRAEOSC that will support the strategic mission area of cancer, from a data perspective. Work will be aimed at accelerating research and innovation under the cancer mission in the context of EOSC, thereby contributing to enhancing its user base. EOSC represents a policy and capacity-building commitment to operationalise a "Web of FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) data and services" for millions of researchers in Europe and globally. Actions funded under the topic will contribute to enhancing access, as well as the possibility to integrate and federate infrastructures, services, data and other resources, while promoting openness and the FAIR data principles.

These infrastructure and data-centered efforts in the Health Sciences aim at building a federated, interconnected environment that allows researchers to seamlessly interact with each other's data and services in line with the FAIR principles, contributing to the development of EHDS (the European Health Data Space).