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RULES FOR RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES AT UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

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[1] This document has been translated from Swedish into English. If the English version differs from the original, the Swedish version takes precedence.

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1.   Description

The aim of these rules is to ensure overall coordination of research infrastructures at Umeå University that are accessible to more users than an individual research group.

This document clarifies the criteria for a research infrastructure to be defined as a *research infrastructure at Umeå University*, the University's coordination regarding the Swedish Research Council's process for funding research infrastructures of national interest, and the funding of research infrastructures at Umeå University.

2.   Background

Research infrastructures[2] are a key condition for carrying out high-quality research at Umeå University's faculties and the Umeå School of Education. Certain infrastructures are funded by the Swedish Research Council's Council for Research Infrastructures (VR-RFI) funding model, which involves higher education institutions providing co-funding at an equal level to the allocation from VR-RFI, while other infrastructures are funded by the University or other funding bodies. This means that higher education institutions must have a strategic plan for funding and prioritising research infrastructures. For Umeå University to give researchers access to the best research infrastructure, common principles for internal management must therefore be in place that clarify planning, prioritisation, and funding.

Questions relating to research infrastructure are handled by the Council for Research Infrastructure at Umeå University (RIS) in accordance with the Council's instruction.

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[2] "Facilities, resources and related services that are used by the scientific community to conduct research in their respective fields, and covers scientific equipment or sets of instruments, knowledge-based resources such as collections, archives or structured scientific information, enabling information and communication technology-based infrastructures such as grid, computing, software and communication, or any other entity of a unique nature essential to conduct research. Such infrastructures may be 'single-sited' or 'distributed' (an organised network of resources) in accordance with Article 2(a) of Council Regulation (EC) No 723/2009 of 25 June 2009 on the Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC)." (Source: European Commission, Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014, declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty Text, Official Journal of the European Union 26.6.2014, p. L 187/25).

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3. Research infrastructures at Umeå University

3.1 Definition of research infrastructure

A research infrastructure at Umeå University is defined as:

- a facility (equipment, installation, database, knowledge base, virtual resource or other resource) and the associated human competence necessary to carry out research of the highest quality;

and which

- can be used by more than one research group at Umeå University or other higher education institutions/external partners;
- is available to all researchers at Umeå University on the same terms;
- can offer user support, training courses or education at different levels that are linked to the research infrastructure;
- has a responsible host department or faculty, and a clear management and organisational structure;
- has a long-term plan for usage, development, evaluation and decommissioning.

Research infrastructures that meet the above criteria are given increased visibility through presentation on the university-wide web pages for research infrastructure.

Annual inventorying, as described in greater detail in Section 3.2, determines which research infrastructures are given the status of a research infrastructure at Umeå University.

3.2 Annual research infrastructure inventory at Umeå University

Research infrastructures that meet the above criteria should be registered or updated in the Research Infrastructure portal, which is open annually between 1 January and 31 March. RIS decides in April each year which of the registered infrastructures meet the criteria. The decision is announced in May. These research infrastructures at Umeå University will be presented on dedicated web pages. The information that these presentations must contain is described in greater detail in Appendix 1. Figure 1 depicts the annual inventory process.
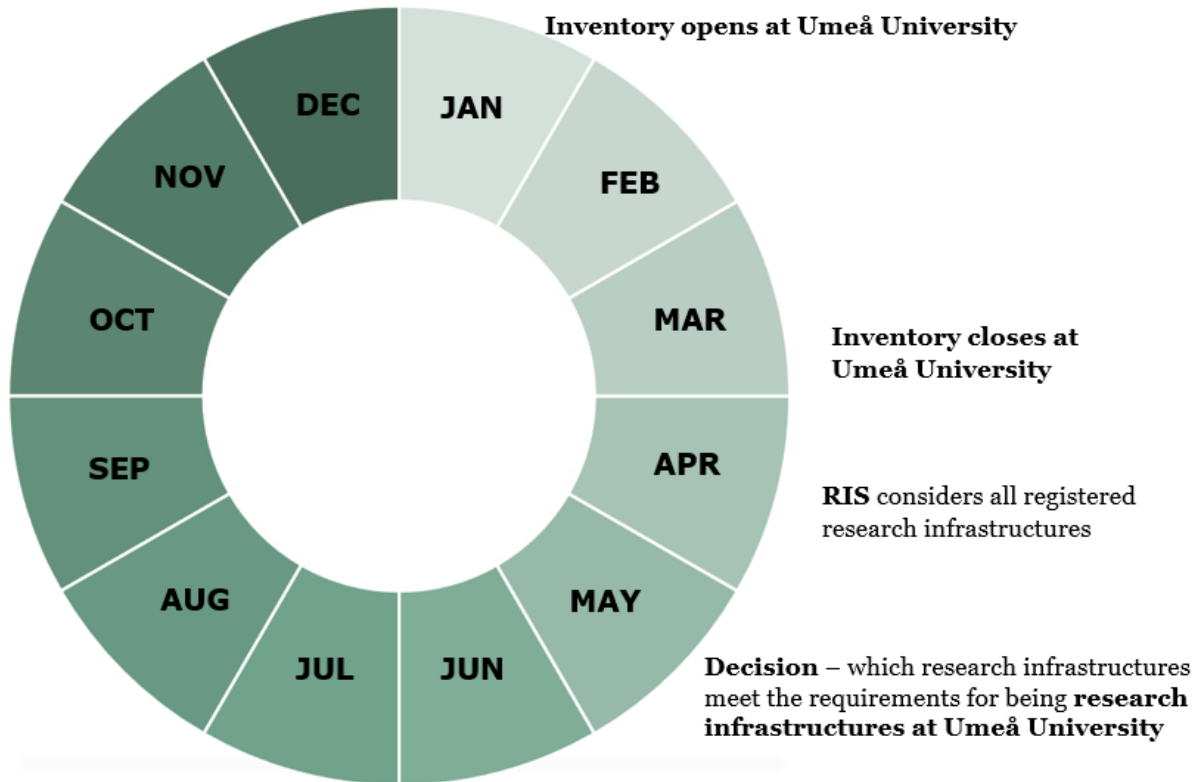
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Figure 1: Annual cycle for research infrastructure inventory at Umeå University.

4. The University's coordination of VR-RFI's funding process

The Swedish Research Council funds research infrastructures of national interest within all scientific fields via a two-year process consisting of a needs inventory, prioritising these needs, and a call for proposals aimed at prioritised infrastructures. At the level of higher education institutions, applications are submitted by organisations, with the Vice-Chancellor needing to grant final approval for applications in a letter of intent. Detailed information about the process can be found on the Swedish Research Council's website. The Swedish Research Council also publishes a guide to research infrastructure, which is updated regularly.

At national level, the higher education institutions' processes for grant applications and for prioritising needs are coordinated by the Universities' Reference Group for Research Infrastructure (URFI), which also holds regular meetings with VR-RFI.

At Umeå University, VR-RFI's funding process is coordinated and prepared by RIS to ensure university-wide strategic prioritisation and planning of research infrastructure. RIS is responsible for ensuring that the coordination process and timelines for Umeå University are communicated well ahead of time.

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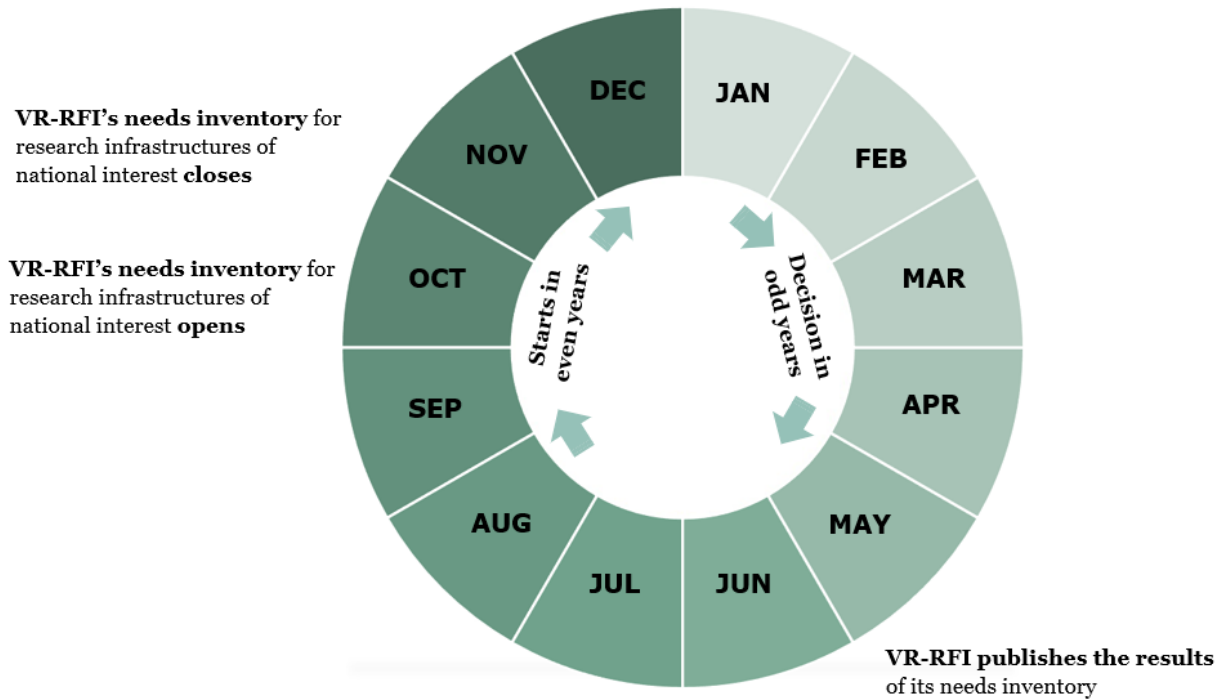Figures 2 and 3 illustrate VR-RFI's process:

Figure 2: VR-RFI's needs inventory for research infrastructures of national interest.
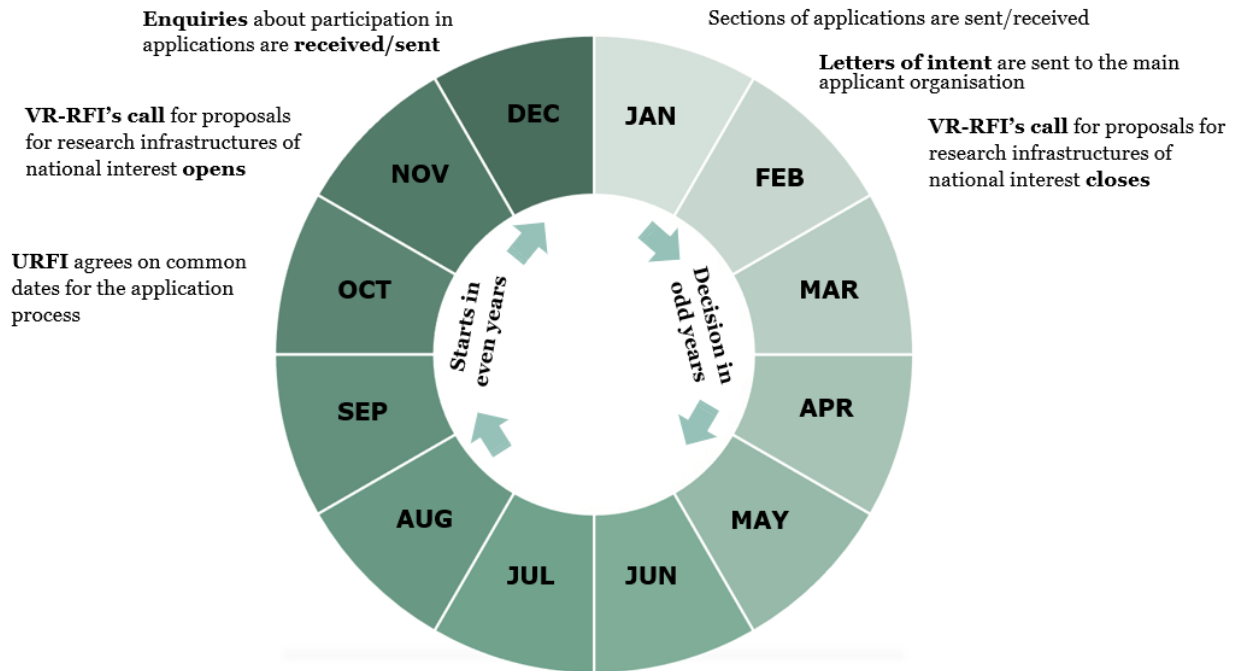

Figure 3: VR-RFI's call for proposals for research infrastructures of national interest.

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5. Funding of research infrastructures at Umeå University

The status of a research infrastructure at Umeå University does not mean that the research infrastructure in question is entitled to university-wide funding. Before applying for national funding, co-funding from the University should be discussed and ensured at an early stage of the application process.

The following applies for those research infrastructures at Umeå University that are co-funded by the University centrally and the faculty:

- 70% of the University's cost for co-funding is financed by the university-wide level, and 30% by the faculty.
- According to the Vice-Chancellor's decision (reg. no. 2012/1357 approved on 17 December 2013), all new decisions on internal university-wide initiatives cover all costs, including funding for university-, faculty- and department-wide costs (*gemensamma kostnader*). This means that funding granted from the budget item for research infrastructure must cover costs for both the initiative's core operations and its support operations at all three levels.

Every year, all faculties are given the opportunity to submit requests for co-funding of research infrastructure. The process is illustrated in Figure 4, and consists of the following steps:

- University Management informs the faculties about the current year's process and timeline in March.
- The faculties then begin collecting requests to be submitted in April.
- The Council for Research Infrastructure at Umeå University (RIS) processes each faculty's requests.
- The proposals are coordinated with University Management both before and after the faculties' final meeting on the issue, which takes place in June.
- The proposed decision on co-funding is agreed in August.
- The final proposed decision is then sent to the faculties.
- The Vice-Chancellor decides on co-funding of research infrastructure in September.
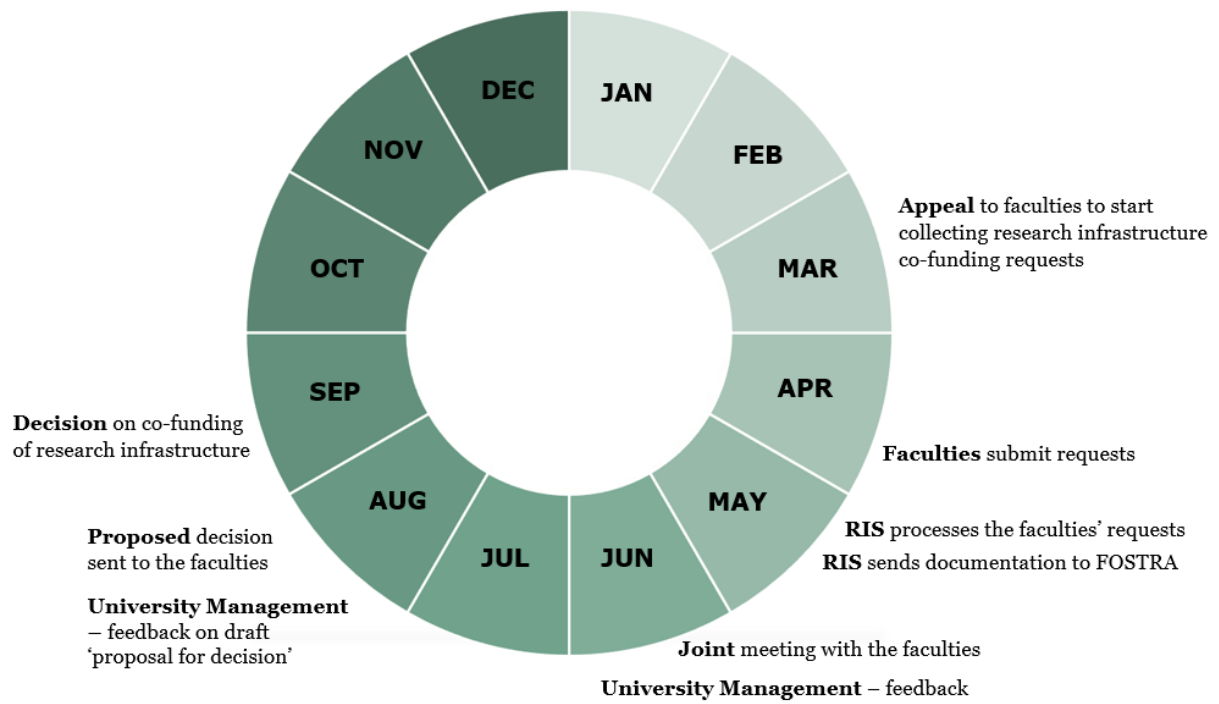
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Figure 4: Annual cycle for the co-funding process for research infrastructure at Umeå University

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Appendix 1: Presentation of research infrastructures on Umeå University's website

On the university-wide website, the description of a research infrastructure that has been given the status of research infrastructure at Umeå University must contain the following sections:

Information on research infrastructure start page:

- name/abbreviation/logo;

- brief description of the research infrastructure (max. 200 words) in Swedish and English;

- representative images. Option of clickable images for specific technologies/databases;

- description of what researchers/users can expect; and

- accessibility and booking (booking terms and opportunity to link to booking system).

Functions (optional):

- link to the research infrastructure's web page;

- opportunity for notifications from the infrastructure manager (e.g. restrictions, machines or databases not working). Can be hidden when not needed;

- option of clickable images for specific documents (policy, FAQs, funding, etc.);

- clickable images or text about introduction and training opportunities (courses, seminars, training);

- option of including publications;

- option of including integrated/linked projects;

- clickable images or text for organisation/staff/location;

- related information (tagging) (links to other information at Umeå University);

- logo of funding body/bodies.