



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Dear QNano Transnational Access User,

These QNano Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) aim to support our Users through their interaction with the Transnational Access (TA) element of the QNano infrastructure.

Please read through the FAQs and User Guidance Manual before contacting ta@qnano-ri.eu with any further queries you may have. If your question is specific to a particular TAF, please refer to the TAF Contact Details page found at www.qnano-ri.eu.

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Eligibility

1. What countries are eligible for support?

Eligible countries are:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark (including Greenland), Estonia, Finland, France (including Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane, La Réunion), Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom. Plus the Associated Countries of the EU: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Faroe Islands, FYR Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Republic of Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey.

2. Are there any age limits?

No there are no age restrictions. However, the calls are competitive and preference is given to first time Users with high quality projects. It is essential that you justify your request for access to your chosen TAF.

3. Do I need to have a PhD?

No, you do not need a PhD to apply. However you will need to demonstrate why you need access and how the visit will benefit your future research. Applicants will be evaluated by a User Selection Panel and high scores will be awarded to applicants with strong curriculum vitae and the applicants age, versus experience and publication record, will be taken into account. PhD students and postdocs are required to include a statement of support with their application.

4. I am freelance can I apply?

Yes, so long as your main activity is scientific research. A condition of funded access is that research outputs, such as published papers, are required from the visits within a reasonable timeframe.

5. Can I apply to more than one TAF?

Yes you can apply to more than one TAF per call. You cannot submit more than one application to the same TAF per call, however, you may access complementary equipment from one TAF if the technology experts agree and the project requires it.

Should a User apply to two TAFs with two separate project applications, these can both be accepted, but one of these will be considered as repeat visit and priority will be given to new Users.

Should a User apply to two TAFs for the same project application (joint application) a very good justification is required in order for one applicant to be allowed visit two TAFs. For a joint application the User must submit one application indicating on the application form that it is a joint application and indicating the two TAFs that the User needs to access.

6. Can I apply for a visit to receive training?

Training can be a component of the visit activity but not the only purpose. It is essential that the focus of the visit is to pursue your own research project. The visit must deliver a research output such as a publication in a journal or a contribution to a PhD Thesis.

7. If I work in one of the QNano institutions, can I apply for Access?

Researchers working within a TAF institution are eligible for support to access other TAFs outside their country of work, but priority will be given to applicants who are from outside of the QNano consortium.

8. Can I visit a TAF in my country of residence?

No. The only exception is in the case of International Organisations (e.g. Joint Research Centre, JRC), where applicants based in both Italy and Belgium can apply for access to the JRC on the same basis as applicants for other EU countries.

9. Can I reapply if I am unsuccessful?

Yes, however, you will need to discuss your application with your proposed host before re-applying. Sometimes the User Selection Panel will provide feedback on your application. This will help you to strengthen the weaker parts of your application.

10. Can I apply for a repeat visit to a TAF?

Yes, although it is advisable that you have evidence of outputs resulting from your previous visit before you reapply and you will need strong justification for requiring a repeat visit. The User Selection Panel will take into consideration if the applicant has had access to the infrastructure before. Priority is generally given to first time users.

Application

1. What is the average visit duration?

The average visit duration is approximately 5-10 working days per TAF over the 4-year duration of the Contract.

2. What does the award cover?

The award covers all research costs in the form of a daily rate. This will be calculated directly from your application form and therefore you need to have discussed your project with your proposed host in advance of submission. You will not be required to formulate a budget.

The award also covers the cost of your international travel, based on an apex fare, local accommodation and a per diem which contributes towards your subsistence and local travel.

You will be required to meet the cost of local travel in your country of origin, e.g. taxi to the airport.

Each TAF has different ways of managing their budgets, please speak to the relevant TAF admin for more detailed information if your application is approved.



3. What is a Per Diem?

QNano will pay International travel plus accommodation. In addition Users will receive a Per Diem which is a contribution to your local subsistence and travel (including travel to and from the airport in the host country). This is a set daily rate that may vary between TAF's and is subject to local institutions regulations. Please contact the relevant TAF admin for more detailed information once your application is approved.

4. Who should act as my host?

Your host is the technology expert at your chosen TAF who will be your main contact. However, it is essential that you contact them in advance of making your application to ensure that they are available and are the most appropriate person to be named as your host on your application.

5. Do I require a supporting statement?

A supporting statement is needed as a reference for PhD students and postdoctoral researchers only. All others should fill out the boxes with n/a (not applicable) and use nosupport@qnano-ri.eu as the email address to bypass this section.

6. Who should provide my supporting statement?

Your supporting statement will be used as a reference. Therefore it should be provided by a senior peer who knows your work first-hand (e.g. supervisor).

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their supporter submits the statement via the online system by the deadline. Late supporting statements will not be accepted and the application automatically rejected.

7. What if my supporter doesn't submit the supporting statement before the call deadline?

Then your application will not be eligible for assessment by the User Selection Panel under that call. We suggest you contact your supporter in advance of making your application to ensure they will be able to provide the statement in good time.

You will receive an email notifying you when the supporting statement is submitted. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the supporting statement is submitted. TAF administrators will assist with any technical problems experienced by the supporter, if they are contacted in advance of the deadline.

8. Why can't supporting statements be sent via email?

The supporting statement must be an integrated part of the application so that is available to the User Selection Panel. The QNano software is modelled on the European Commission's Marie Curie Action System, and has been approved by the Commission as an acceptable method of collecting applications and associated information.

9. What if I accidentally submit the application before I have completed all the fields?

Before you can submit your application a full copy of your application will appear on screen. You will need to check that you have completed all the fields. If you have not completed the mandatory fields they will be marked in red. You will need to cancel your submission and complete the application before the option to submit will appear on the form.

Scoring and Visiting

1. How will my application be scored?

Please see the application form and the guidelines to completing it. These give guidance on what the User Selection Panel expects to see and a guide to the length.

2. How does the application process work?

Once you have submitted your application the TAL/TAF administrator will check the application for eligibility. It will then be reviewed internally by the named technology experts and passed to the User Selection Panel. The User Selection Panel will consist of a panel of external international reviewers. The Panel usually consists of 4 people. They will then review each of the TAF applications and meet at the TAF for a day-long meeting to discuss the applications. The TA administrator will act as secretary and note the results of the meeting. These results will then be sent to the applicants via email.

3. How will my application be assessed?

All of the TAF User Selection Panels will follow the same protocol. Once the Panel has marked the applications they will meet at the USP meeting to discuss their scores and recommendations. The USP will review all applications against the following criteria:

Criteria

1 Does the project show a realistic methodological approach and work plan?

2 Does the project contribute towards the objectives of the European Research Area? Will there be benefit of mobility through the transfer of knowledge and improved collaborations? Will there be a contribution to research excellence and European competitiveness?

3 Value of supporting statement (only for PhD and postdoctoral applicants)

4 Is there justification for requested access to facilities and staff expertise? Consider if the User should apply to a different TAF. Does the User have similar facilities in their home country?

5 Value of the expected gains and outputs.

Criteria

6 Scientific merit of User/User Group¹ (from CV).

4. What are the objectives of the European Research Area (ERA) and therefore the remit of QNano?

QNano is an analytical research infrastructure that aims to:

- Support the development and implementation of best practice and high quality research into the interactions of nanomaterials with living systems;
- Promote nanomaterials' characterisation in-situ as the basis for reproducible nanosafety assessment;
- Support researchers to fully characterise their own nanomaterials, before, during and after exposure to living systems, as part of their on-going research in nanosafety or nanomedicine.

Further details can be found in the presentation [European Research Area](#).

5. How long after the deadline will I be able to visit?

Usually, your visit can begin approximately 10-12 weeks after the deadline. You should plan your visit to start no earlier than April 2012 after the 1st Call has closed on the 31st of January 2012.

6. Do I need to write a report when I leave?

Yes, you will need to complete a confidential form for the European Commission and a User Evaluation Report. The latter requires that you enter your anticipated scientific output (e.g. peer-reviewed publications, conference contribution). They are both completed online.

7. When will I find out if my project has been approved?

The application review process takes between 8-10 weeks from the closing of the call (e.g. from 31st January 2012 for QNano Call 1). Once the User Selection Panel has met and agreed the allocation of awards the results of your application will be emailed to you and your host TAF.

¹ Note: QNano does not have any User Groups for the current call. If multiple Users from one project or group wish to apply, we may establish a User Group for subsequent calls.

Miscellaneous

1. Why is QNano Access limited to 15 Institutions?

The range of institutions covered by QNano is fixed under a funding contract from the European Commission's Infrastructure Action. It is not possible to offer Access via QNano to institutions that are not part of the contract. The selection of these institutions was based on the uniqueness of their technology and expertise.

Abbreviations

TA – Transnational Access

TAF – Transnational Access Facility

TAL – Transnational Access Leader

TA Admin – User Office Transnational Access Administrator

TAF Admin – Transnational Access Facility Administrator

USP – User Selection Panel

Glossary

Access provider: means the beneficiary that is in charge of providing access to the infrastructure(s) or installations(s).

Infrastructure: means a facility, a resource (or a coherent set of them) together with the related services that are used by the scientific community to conduct research.

TAF/Installation: means a part of an infrastructure that could be used independently from the rest.

User: means a researcher applying for access, either individually or as part of a User Group, including the User Group leader.

User Group: means a research team of one or more researchers given access to the infrastructure under the QNano project. The User Group leader and majority of the Users must work in an institution established in a Member State or Associated State. The User Group leader and majority of the Users should work in a country other than where the TAF/Installation to be visited is based. No User Groups have been established for Call 1 of QNano.

Transnational Access: means the provision of cost free access to Users to the 15 TAFs/Installations offering Transnational Access, in response to TA calls via the QNano website.