

Q&A National Facilities

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Q1. What are National Facilities and which ones are available at HT?

A1. National Facilities are Research Infrastructures, i.e., facilities, resources and related services, used by the scientific community to conduct top-level research in their respective fields, regardless of institutional or national affiliation.

Specific operational units, called Infrastructural Units (IU), and defined as the set of people, tools, resources, technological procedures and cutting-edge experimental protocols necessary for a specific thematic line of research, are part of each individual NF.

Following the signing of the [Convenzione](#) in December 2020 between Human Technopole and the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Universities and Research and the Ministry of Health, a two-level public consultation open to the national scientific community was conducted over the course of 2021-22 to identify National Platforms to be implemented at HT.

The set-up activities to allow access to the NFs by researchers from the national scientific community will be completed in the next months, including the partial expansion of laboratory spaces and the definition of access rules and of the application process.

Starting from the summer of 2024, the following National Facilities will be open for access: .

- **Genomics**, with the following infrastructural units (IUs): IU1 High Throughput Sequencing, IU2 Multi-Omics Technologies, IU3 Computational Genomics, IU4 Technology Development
- **Genome Engineering and Disease Modelling**, with the following infrastructural units: IU1 Pluripotent Stem Cells (PSCs), IU2 Gene Editing Technologies, IU3 Validation, IU4 Technology Development.
- **Structural Biology**, with the following infrastructural units: IU1 Cryo-Electron Microscopy, IU2 Biomass Production, IU3 Biophysics, IU4 Structural Proteomics, IU5 Dynamic Single-molecule, IU6 Technology Development.
- **Light Imaging**, with the following infrastructural units: IU1 Imaging, IU2 Tissue Processing, IU3 Flow Cytometry, IU4 High Content Imaging, IU5 Ion Imaging, IU6 Technology Development – Custom Microscopy
- **Data Handling and Analysis**, with the following infrastructural units: IU1 Biomage Analysis, IU2 Omics Analysis, IU3 Technology Development-DevOps and Web Development.

Furthermore, an extensive training programme is being set up to share the expertise of NF staff with the research community interested in gaining experience in the cutting-edge technologies available at HT.

Q2. Who will be in charge of evaluating the access requests and approving the access to the National Facilities?

A2. Article 7 of the *Convenzione* provides for the creation of a Standing Independent Evaluation Committee - SIEC (*Commissione Indipendente di Valutazione Permanente - CIVP*) consisting of eight members, plus the Chair of the Foundation's Scientific Committee Professor Walter Ricciardi.

The members selected from the list provided by the Ministry of University and Research and of Health and appointed by the Consiglio di Sorveglianza of the HT Foundation on 15 November 2023, are:

- **Professor Filippo Mancia**, SIEC Chair, Professor of Physiology and Cellular Biophysics, Department of Physiology & Cellular Biophysics, Columbia University, New York, U.S.A.
- **Professor Arianna Tucci**, SIEC Deputy Chair, Associate Professor of Medical Genomics, Queen Mary University of London, UK
- **Professor Juha Kere**, Professor of Molecular Genetics, Department of Biosciences and Nutrition, Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden
- **Professor Samuele Marro**, Associate Professor of Neuroscience and co-Director of the Stem Cell Engineering Core, Black Family Stem Cell Institute, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, U.S.A.
- **Dr. Jan Peychl**, Senior Service Leader, Light Microscopy Facility, Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics, Dresden, Germany
- **Professor Giampietro Schiavo**, Professor of Neuroscience, Department of Neuromuscular Diseases, Queen Square Institute of Neurology, University College London, UK
- **Professor Maria Secrier**, Associate Professor of Computational Cancer Biology, Genetics Institute, Department of Genetics, Evolution and Environment, University College London, UK
- **Doctor Virginie Uhlmann**, Group Leader, European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI), Cambridge, UK and Director of the BioVisionCenter, University of Zurich, CH

The SIEC may use anonymous external reviewers to assess access requests if it does not have the necessary expertise in-house or in view of the number of requests (Convenzione, Art. 6, par. 3).

Q3. How were members of the Standing Independent Evaluation Committee (Commissione Indipendente di Valutazione Permanente) selected?

A3. The members were selected following the publication on the websites of the Ministries of University and Research and of Health on 4 July 2023, of a public notice for the pre-selection of candidates. Any highly qualified scientist without affiliation or existing assignment with the HT Foundation, public or private Italian universities, Italian research hospitals (IRCCS) both public and private and Italian public research bodies was able to apply to become a member of the SIEC. The Consiglio di Sorveglianza of the HT Foundation received the list of pre-selected candidates from the Ministry of University and Research and the Ministry of Health and approved the final members list.

Q4. When will the National Facilities be accessible and how?

A4. The HT Foundation is working to open the NFs as soon as possible. As defined within article 6 of the Convenzione, the SIEC is working to finalise the selection procedures for the access to the NFs by the national scientific community (*Access Management Plan*) Access guidelines and the pilot call for access will be available soon on the HT website where a description of each National Facility and list of Infrastructural Units can be found

Q5. Who will be able to access the National Facilities?

A5. The access of external Users affiliated to Universities, Italian Research Hospitals (IRCCS), and Public Research Entities will be supported by open calls for access as provided for in *Law 160/2019, art. 1, comma 276, letter b*. Access will be granted based on the principles of scientific excellence, with the aim of supporting high-quality research.

Q6. How have the Heads of National Facility been selected?

A6. As indicated in the Convenzione (art. 4, par. 2), the Human Technopole Foundation is responsible for the recruitment of *Responsabili di Piattaforma* (i.e. Heads of National Facility) through international competitive calls. The calls were published on the *Careers* portal of the Human Technopole institutional website and on other career portals. The applications were assessed by a committee appointed by the Foundation's Management Committee. The committee was made up of a minimum of five members, at least three of whom external, in line with the provisions for the selection of the scientific leadership positions laid out in the Policy for the recruitment of administrative and scientific personnel of the Human Technopole Foundation.

Q7. Will Human Technopole researchers have privileged access to National Facilities?

A7. As established by Law 160/2019 par. 276, researchers affiliated to Italian Universities, Italian Research Hospitals (IRCCS), and Public Research Entities will be guaranteed the prevalent use of the National Facilities. The access of these group of Users will be supported by open calls for access, and will be free of charge, for the project (or part of the project) approved for Access. Human Technopole researchers will be able to access the NFs for the remaining use. The costs for the use of the National Facilities will then be borne by the individual Principal Investigators/Group Leaders of HT.

Q8. Can researchers access NFs with their own funds?

A8. The requirement that the prevalent use of the NFs must be dedicated to free access (Convenzione art. 6, comma 6) of researchers affiliated to universities, Italian Research Hospitals (IRCCS) and Public Research Entities implies that all projects supported by research funds with budget allocated to the required analyses will not be eligible. Researchers holding such funding will therefore not be able to use the National Facilities as foreseen by the Convenzione, as this would represent double funding.

Q9. Where will the scientific community and the public find information about National Facilities?

A9. All communications are managed centrally by Human Technopole with the aim to send consistent messages to the Ministries, the national scientific community as well as the public. For this reason, all information is made available on the HT website and updates are posted on HT social media accounts. No dedicated social media account or website will be created in this phase for the National Facilities.