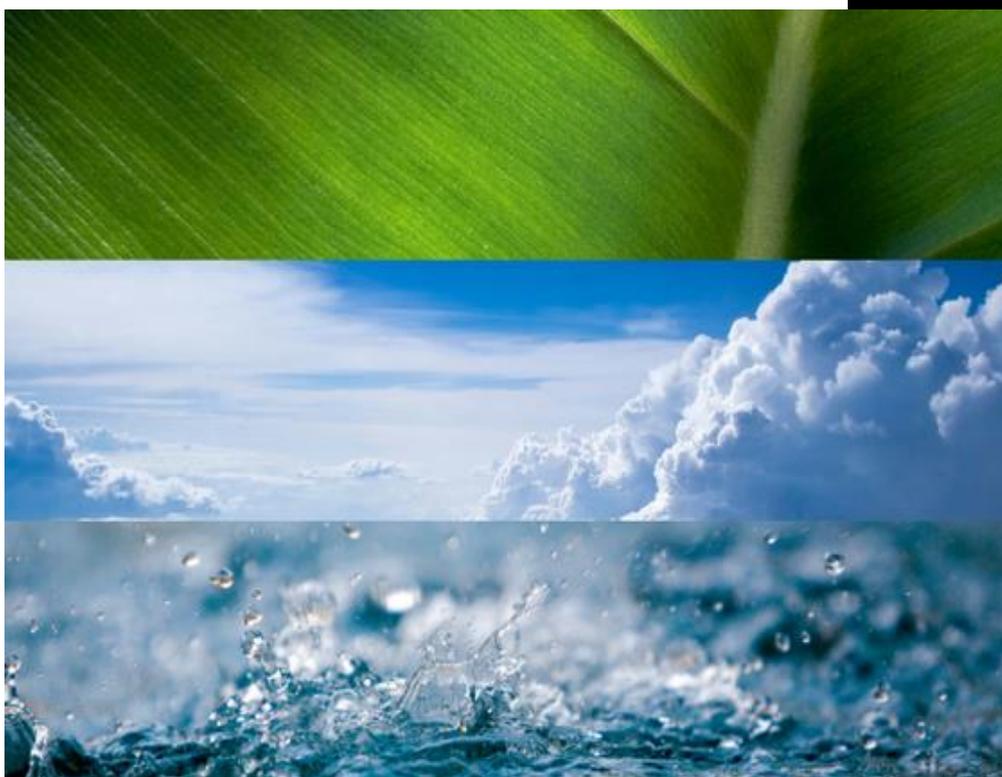


**Report to summarize the experiences of RIs with linked third parties in H2020 projects to the European Commission and the ESFRI**



**Deliverable: 6.14 Report to summarize the experiences of RIs with linked third parties in H2020 projects to the European Commission and the ESFRI**

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Version 1			

**Deliverable Review Checklist**

A list of checkpoints has been created to be ticked off by the Task Leader before finalizing the deliverable. These checkpoints are incorporated into the deliverable template where the Task Leader must tick off the list.

- Appearance is generally appealing and according to the RINGO template. Cover page has been updated according to the Deliverable details. x
- The executive summary is provided giving a short and to the point description of the deliverable. x
- All abbreviations are explained in a separate list. x
- All references are listed in a concise list. x
- The deliverable clearly identifies all contributions from partners and justifies the resources used. x
- A full spell check has been executed and is completed. x

**DISCLAIMER**

This document has been produced in the context of the *project* Readiness of ICOS for Necessities of integrated Global Observations (RINGO)

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Amendments, comments and suggestions should be sent to the authors.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the Horizon 2020 -framework programme (H2020), the aim has been to simplify the participation of universities and other institutes in all EU countries and beyond (EU Insight...2013). The rules related to Linked Third Parties (LTP) in H2020 aim at more flexibility related to the participation of LTPs, as compared for example to the FP7 -framework programme.

In the context of H2020, the term 'Linked Third Party' refers to 'legal entities which participate in Horizon 2020 by carrying out some tasks in an action, but which do not sign the Grant Agreement (including entities linked to the beneficiaries)' or 'third parties involved in an action' (Article 8 of the General Model GA - multi-beneficiary) (What is the difference...2020).

In the RINGO project, there are 8 beneficiaries with a total of 15 LTPs within the consortium. The reason for including LTPs in the RINGO project came from negotiations in the proposal writing phase. It was agreed that there would be only one direct beneficiary per ICOS member country due to the extensive number of institutions included in the whole ICOS infrastructure. By adding LTPs, it was possible to widen the expertise and networks from other institutions as well, and because of these relatively small contributions needed from the LTP institutions, including these institution as direct beneficiaries would have resulted in a more administratively-heavy management.

A small survey was conducted among the beneficiaries with LTPs, asking about their experiences of having LTPs in the consortium. The survey focused on themes related to administration, conducting activities in the Work Packages and to the overall feeling about LTPs added value and level of engagement and inclusiveness in the project. The respondents were both administrative and research staff working in the project, and came from the beneficiary institutions with LTPs. Nine replies were received.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Experiences related to project administration**

The survey results indicated that the process of getting LTPs included in the project consortium in the proposal writing stage had been very, or somewhat clear (according to over 50% of the respondents). 22%, however, reported that this had been somewhat unclear. This appeared to most likely be due to the instructions perceived as somewhat unclear by 44% of the respondents, while over 50% of the participants had perceived the instructions very or somewhat clear. A total of 55 % of the respondents reported that the communication had been clear or somewhat clear, while 11% felt that communication had been very unclear. When asked about the efficiency of organising the Periodic Reporting with LTPs, 44% of the respondents reported this to have been effective, while 22% disagreed.

Overall, it appears that the experiences related to project administration with LTPs were considered to be as effective and clear, but deviations from this perception were also expressed. This could be due to a number of reasons: ICOS RI is a distributed RI, and its member organisations are spread over several geographical, cultural, linguistic and scientific areas. There are also several different types of organisational and political atmospheres within the consortium.

The view that having LTPs adds complexity to the administration of the project is shared also by the coordinator when it comes to making changes to the consortium. If an LTP is changed to a direct beneficiary, or if an additional LTP is added to the consortium on at a later stage, the management process requires several steps. Hence, the efficiency of project management could be improved by reducing the amount of steps needed to complete this procedure.

### **Experiences related to the added value of LTPs**

The perceived benefit of having LTPs in the consortium as opposed to including just direct beneficiaries was perceived differently by the respondents. 44% felt it was somewhat useful to include LTPs, 44% felt the opposite. The researcher / technical staff were mostly in favor of having LTPs, the administrative staff less so. When asked about the added value that the LTPs would bring into the project, it was, overall, that LTPs can contribute to the expertise and capacity of the consortium and if they only have a small contribution resource-wise, it would make sense to add them as LTPs instead of direct beneficiaries. From an administrative point of view, however, respondents felt that having LTPs makes project management more complex and causes an overload of work.

When it comes to the clarity of work division within WPs and tasks, a clear majority of the respondents indicated, however, that this had been clear and the LTP status had not impacted this at all.

### **Experiences related to the level of inclusion of LTPs in the project**

44% of respondents were of the opinion that the LTPs engaged in the same way in the project as participants from direct beneficiaries. 11% disagreed, and the rest had no clear opinion. No respondent indicated noticing any friction between the LTPs and direct beneficiaries while working in the project, but some again mentioned that having LTPs was unnecessarily complicated (from an administrative point of view). The majority (66%, the rest of the replies being of no opinion) also reported that no LTP had expressed feelings of not being an equal part of the RINGO community.

These results are in line with the common atmosphere in the ICOS community which is well integrated, and where engagement and level of inclusion have been given attention from the

beginning, already in the RI planning phase. It has to be remembered, however, that the aim of this Deliverable was to map out the experiences of beneficiaries with LTPs, and is hence not addressing the experiences of the LTPs themselves.

### **Overall experiences**

When asked about their willingness to use LTPs in future projects, 22% indicated they strongly supported this, while 33% were against using LTPs. The rest (44%) were of the opinion that it did not make any difference to them. Some respondents reported having already included LTPs in new project proposals due to the positive experiences from RINGO, while administrative staff expressed that having separate contracts with external parties is easier to handle than LTPs in the consortium.

### **SUMMARY**

The survey results clearly indicated that while the expertise and competence of the project is improved by adding partners as LTPs, especially if their contribution represents relatively little resource, the administrative aspect of having them was causing complexity and increased workloads. While the research and technical staff were happy to include the LTPs, the project administrative staff would prefer to avoid using the LTP instrument. Because the number of beneficiaries with LTPs in the RINGO project is relatively small, however, these results should be understood in the context of one project only. It needs to be emphasised, however, that the partners who wish to include LTPs must reserve sufficient administrative resources. The coordinator also needs to invest enough time in communicating the roles and responsibilities of direct beneficiaries and LTPs in the beginning of the project.

### **References**

What is the difference between beneficiaries and third parties in Horizon 2020? European Commission (n.d.) 2.12.2020 <http://www.iprhelpdesk.eu/node/2549>

EU Insight – Horizon 2020 (H2020). Euraxess Links Network (2013). 2.12.2020 [https://cdn1.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/domains/india/eu\\_insight\\_feb\\_2013\\_-\\_horizon\\_2020.pdf](https://cdn1.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/domains/india/eu_insight_feb_2013_-_horizon_2020.pdf)

### **Abbreviations**

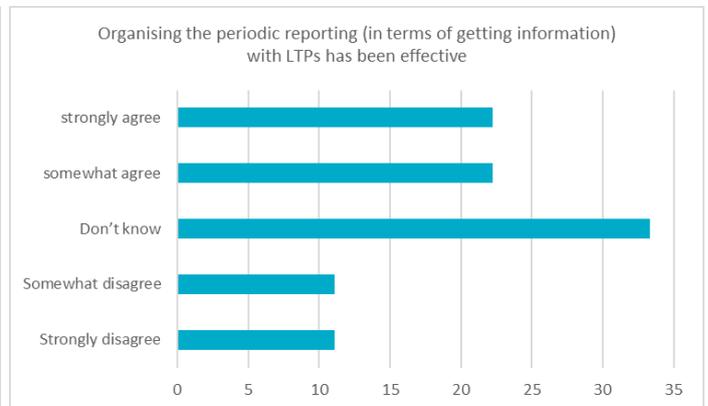
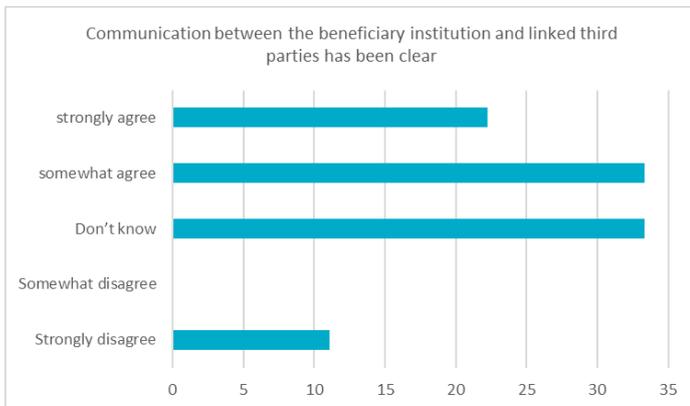
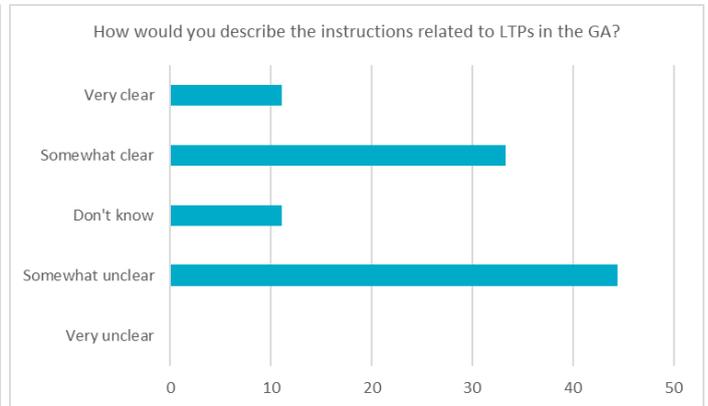
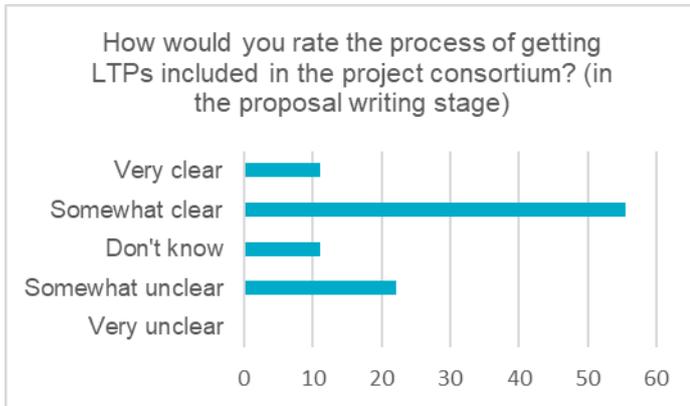
ICOS RI = Integrated Carbon Observation System Research Infrastructure

LTP = Linked Third Party

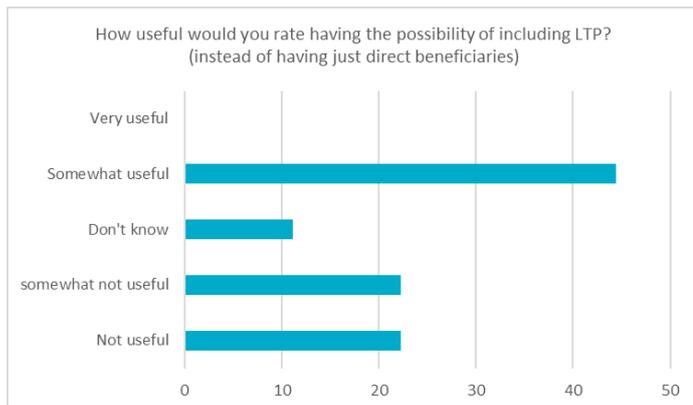
RINGO = Readiness of ICOS for Necessities of integrated Global Observations

## Appendix 1. Survey results

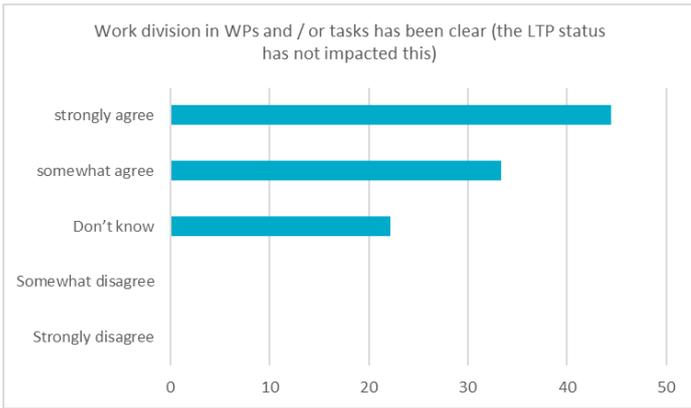
### Experiences related to project administration



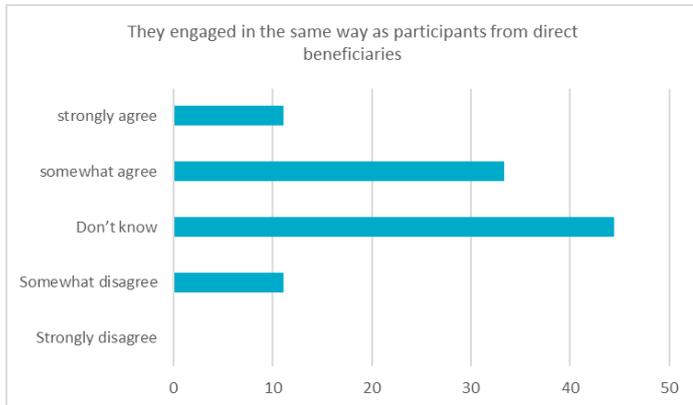
### Experiences related to the added value of LTPs



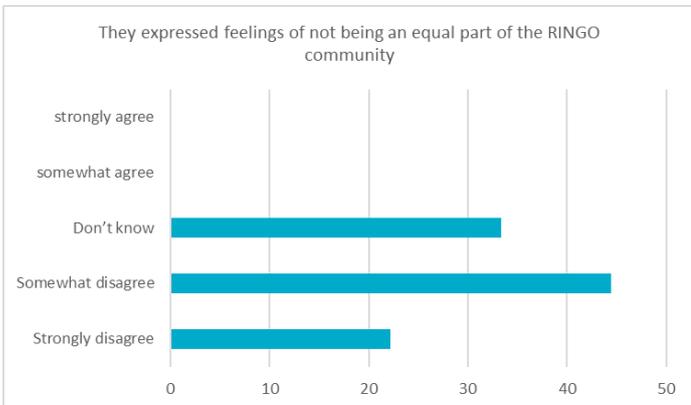
I guess for minor contributions it makes sense to add them as LTP in stead of full beneficiaries
No. I think LTPs should be avoided in the future.
no, there is no difference
don't know
No difference except that the administrative part (data upload and control) is totally charged to the beneficiary only this causing an overlaod of work.
Yes, it is very helpful.
x
Of course, that is the reason why they are involved. No institution span the whole field necessary to conduct the tasks.
No, it shifted admin burden from head office to leader of third party cluster



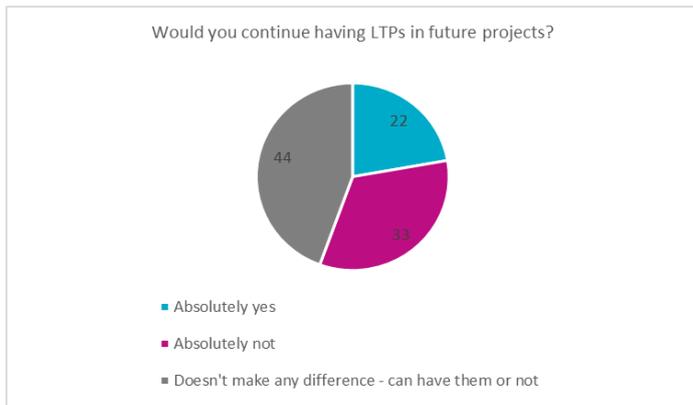
**Experiences related to the level of engagement and inclusiveness of LTPs in the project**



Did you notice any friction between LTPs and direct beneficiaries?
no
No friction, but it is unnecessarily complicated.
no, I don't think so
no
no
No friction.
No
No
No not really



**Overall experiences**



Any other comments?
already applied LTP in other projects because experience in RINGO was positive
From administrative point of view only. Easier with separate contracts.