



## D5.3-2

# The criteria for CLARIN Centres

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## 1 Executive Summary

This report describes the typology of CLARIN Centres and gives the criteria and the procedures to become a centre of a specific type. It is meant as a support for those countries who are preparing to become a CLARIN member as well as for countries that recently joined.

The target audience is both the national coordinators and future national coordinators, *i.e.* those that are going to manage their country's participation in CLARIN ERIC. Also, the document is hopefully useful for people working on national service-providing institutions or data centres.

The document is part of a series of documents that addresses issues relevant to the construction of national consortia and knowledge sharing infrastructures. It takes into account the professional profiles needed for a typical CLARIN consortium, cost estimation, the handling of intellectual property rights (IPR), standards *etc.*

The document builds primarily on the experience gathered during the first years of CLARIN ERIC. The CLARIN-PLUS workshop on facilitating the creation of national consortia, held in Solstrand (Norway), in March 2016, also gave useful input through the discussions.

## 2 Introduction

CLARIN ERIC is a consortium consisting of national consortia in each of the member countries. CLARIN has a central website and office but from the users' point of view, it is primarily perceived as a distributed network made out of centres.

There are several types of centres. The backbone of CLARIN is provided by technical centres, in particular **Service Providing Centres** named **CLARIN A- and B-Centres**. Currently there are around 20 certified B-Centres, but the list is constantly growing, as new centres apply to be recognized as a B-Centre. The first A-Centres are still in the process of being certified.

Other centre types defined are Knowledge Centres, Metadata Providing Centres, Trust Centres, and External Centres. Information on all current centres and their main services can always be found in the Centre Registry<sup>1</sup>.

The purpose of this document is to describe the typology of CLARIN Centres and to give an overview of the criteria and the procedures to follow in order to be recognized as a centre of a specific type<sup>2</sup>.

## 3 CLARIN Centre Types

CLARIN defines three types of Service Providing Centres: A-, B- and E-Centres. These units, at a university, an academic institute, or a national data centre, offer the scientific community access to resources or services on a sustainable basis. Therefore, there are strict criteria to become a CLARIN A- or B-Centre, and the centres have to pass an

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<sup>1</sup> The Centre Registry, see <https://centres.clarin.eu>

<sup>2</sup> The description of the centre types in [CE-2012-0037](#) cannot currently (February 2017) be used as reference document for centre descriptions and requirements.

assessment to be recognised as an A- or B-Centre. For E-Centres, a special Service Level Agreement will be agreed on.

CLARIN also recognises two types of Knowledge Centres, K- or L-Centres. The Knowledge Centres also have to pass an assessment procedure to be recognised.

Furthermore, CLARIN defines other centre types as C-Centres and T-Centres.

To summarize, there are seven different types of centres:

- **A-Centres** are Service Providing Centres; they offer central services or services of a common interest for the CLARIN community on a sustainable basis.
- **B-Centres** are Service Providing Centres; they offer access to resources, services and knowledge on a sustainable basis, typically on a national basis.
- **C-Centres** are Metadata Providing Centres; their metadata are integrated with CLARIN but they need not offer any further services.
- **K- & L-Centres** are general and local Knowledge Centres and part of the CLARIN Knowledge Sharing Infrastructure.
- **T-Centres** are Trust Centres, providing access to protected resources and services via the Service Provider Federation. For T-Centres, the Data Seal of Approval (DSA) and the B-Centre assessment procedure are not required.<sup>3</sup>
- **E-Centres** are External Centres, offering services without being part of any national consortium.

Institutions in countries which are not part of CLARIN ERIC are welcome to contact the CLARIN ERIC Office to obtain information about the options to be recognized as a CLARIN Centre.

## 4 Criteria for CLARIN Centres

The following section describes the criteria and procedures to become a specific centre type. We also give links to the CLARIN website where more extensive information can be found.

### 4.1 B-Centres

The first **B-Centres** (the first Service Providing Centres) were certified in May 2013. As mentioned above, B-Centres are expected to offer access to resources, services and knowledge on a **sustainable basis**. In order to ensure the technical sustainability, a list of strict assessment criteria must be met by B-Centres, and an assessment procedure has been decided, see <https://www.clarin.eu/node/3767>. Key **technical issues** are to provide CMDI metadata via OAI-PMH, to use Persistent Identifiers (PID's) for all resources, to be connected to the national federation identity, and to obtain the Data Seal of Approval. Furthermore, **funding should be sustainable**, and the centre's web site should include a visible connection to the CLARIN community.

The centre candidate has to fulfil the following conditions:

- it has a written declaration of centre compliancy by the National Coordinator or the Centre Committee delegate of its CLARIN consortium. Compliancy focuses on accepting and implementing the CLARIN technical requirements and on providing useful data or services to the CLARIN community;
- it has an up-to-date entry in the [centre registry](#);

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<sup>3</sup> The T-Centre description might be changed in the future.

- it has obtained or initiated the Data Seal of Approval procedure at <http://www.datasealofapproval.org/en/assessment/>; and
- it has filled in the B-Centre checklist at <http://hdl.handle.net/11372/DOC-78>.

The Assessment Committee checks the fulfilment of these requirements during the assessment procedure. Usually, there are two assessment rounds per year. A B-Centre certificate is valid for three years, and needs to be renewed afterwards.

## 4.2 A-Centres

A-Centres are Service Providing Centres that offer central services or services of a common interest for the whole CLARIN community on a sustainable basis. The assessment procedure for A-Centres is described at <https://www.clarin.eu/content/centre-assessment-procedure>.

The A-Centre candidate has to fulfil the following conditions:

- it has an up-to-date entry in the [centre registry](#); and
- it has filled in the A-service checklist (in preparation).

Centres that are interested in offering services as an A-Centre should present the proposal to CLARIN's Technical Director after ensuring national and institutional support for offering a sustainable service. As a next step, the Technical Director or the national member of the Standing Committee for CLARIN Technical Centres (SCCTC) can suggest the centre as an A-Centre candidate to the SCCTC, which then prioritizes and decides the functionality and services that are relevant as A-services for the CLARIN community.

It is important to note that A-services should be implemented in such a way that they can be transferred to another CLARIN centre if the situation changes in such a way that the current centre cannot run them in a sustainable way.

## 4.3 C-Centres

CLARIN supports open and sharable metadata, which can be harvested by the OAI-PMH protocol<sup>4</sup>. The aggregated metadata can be shared through the Virtual Language Observatory (VLO) to promote and ease the sharing of research data within the CLARIN community.

A core issue for C-Centres is to provide metadata for their data resources by means of the OAI-PMH protocol. If an institution aims at becoming a B-Centre, a first step can be to establish a C-Centre. The C-Centre has to provide technical solutions for sharing resources with CMDI metadata and PIDs, and for harvesting metadata for these resources. This can be seen as the first step towards fulfilling the other B-Centre requirements including getting the DSA, but it is also fully allowable to continue to be a C-Centre.

The services of a C-Centre are not required to have the same level of availability as a B-Centre.

The centre candidate has to meet the following conditions:

- it has an up-to-date entry in the [centre registry](#) item 6.1-4, and 6.10 of the B-Centre checklist at <http://hdl.handle.net/11372/DOC-78> about harvesting of metadata; and

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<sup>4</sup> Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting, see [www.openarchives.org/pmh](http://www.openarchives.org/pmh)

- it offers resources to the community; either the resources are publicly available, or the resources are available via login through the Federated Identity Management or CLARIN's Identity Manager.

#### 4.4 Knowledge Centres, K- & L-Centres

There are currently (April 2017) eight certified CLARIN Knowledge Centres<sup>5</sup>. Any institution or centre can apply for being recognized as a K-Centre, also centres outside the CLARIN member countries. K-Centres can be single-sited or distributed, *i.e.* be a collaboration between more than one physical centre or institution in one or more countries.

A K-Centre organisation is required to set up reliable knowledge-sharing services and the scope of the services has to be defined on a dedicated web-page of the respective organisation(s). Details of the procedure are available at <https://www.clarin.eu/content/knowledge-centres>.

If the knowledge-services of a given institution have a rather national scope, *e.g.* the institution is not offering its services in English, the institution can still apply for being recognized as a Knowledge Centre; in such a case the institution can apply for the status of an L-Centre.

#### 4.5 Trust Centres, T-Centres

Trust Centres are providing access to protected resources via the Service Provider Federation. The special focus for a T-Centre is to provide access to resources and services, and the centre may not want to assign priority to fulfil the requirement to become a B-centre, including obtaining the DSA.

The centre candidate has to recognize the vision and the mission of CLARIN and to offer its resources, either as public resources or resources available via login through the Federated Identity Management or CLARIN's Identity Provider.

#### 4.6 External Centres, E-Centres

E-Centres are external, possibly commercial, partners that offer CLARIN relevant technical services, which are not offered by members of CLARIN. In general, the services will be common infrastructure services, *e.g.* a persistent identifier service, or a long-term preservation service. Currently no E-Centres exist. To ensure the availability and the stability of the services offered by E-Centres, CLARIN ERIC may sign a Service Level Agreement with the corresponding centres, which specifies the characteristics of the offered services.

## 5 Experiences / Lessons Learnt

### 5.1 General Comments

It is important to note that CLARIN is a continuously developing infrastructure. The criteria for centre types and centres may change over time, and therefore a reassessment of centre services will be needed.

CLARIN has a high expectation on the availability of the services and the quality of the data provided by centres, and works towards an always more sustainable infrastructure. But CLARIN is also acknowledging that most services are offered by

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.clarin.eu/node/4061>

research institutions, which cannot guarantee a 24/7 uptime or a very short response time to user requests.

CLARIN has and will extend its procedures for monitoring the service availability of all centres. In the future, CLARIN ERIC will ask knowledge centres to report their activities, *e.g.*, by counting how often advice is given, and what types of advice were requested.

## 5.2 B-Centres

[The Data Seal of Approval](#) (DSA) is a requirement to become a B-Centre. Going through the DSA procedure easily takes four to six months from requesting the DSA assessment to grant of label. When applying for B-Centre assessment, is not a requirement to have the DSA in advance, but it is recommended to start the DSA process some time before sending in the B-Centre checklist.

Creating CMDI metadata for resources can also be a time consuming process. It is an option to create a first bundle of resources compliant with CMDI metadata and PIDs and then apply for B-Centre status. The centre has the option to extend the amount of compliant resources both during the assessment and afterwards.

Deadlines for assessments only apply for B-Centres, with two yearly assessment rounds, in spring and in autumn.

## 5.3 Quality of Metadata and Data Resources

It is the responsibility of each individual institution and data centre to deliver research data and metadata of good quality. The research fields are so diverse that the CLARIN community has neither the means nor any rights to question the usefulness of sharing specific research data. But there is ongoing work to curate the metadata harvested into the Virtual Language Observatory (VLO) to make it easier for users of the VLO to search for and find usable data. Help about converting CMDI-profiles to VLO's search facets can be found at <http://vlo.clarin.eu/mapping>.

## 5.4 Summary of Requirements

Centre Type	Description	Assessment
A-Centres	Service Providing Centres; they offer central services or services of a common interest for the CLARIN community on a sustainable basis.	Yes, procedure under development.
B-Centres	Service Providing Centres; they offer access to resources, services and knowledge on a sustainable basis, typically on a national basis.	Yes, B-Centre assessment procedure. Renewal after a 3-year period; DSA is a requirement, see <a href="https://www.clarin.eu/content/assessment-procedure">https://www.clarin.eu/content/assessment-procedure</a> .
C-Centres	Metadata Providing Centres; their metadata are integrated with CLARIN but they need not offer any additional services.	Contact CLARIN Technical Director to get information about requirements for the label. No DSA is required.

E-Centres	External Centres offering services without being part of any national consortium.	Contract with CLARIN Office.
K-Centres	General Knowledge Centres, part of the CLARIN Knowledge Sharing Infrastructure.	Yes, <a href="https://office.clarin.eu/v/CE-2015-0504-Knowledge-Centres-Appl-Instr.pdf">https://office.clarin.eu/v/CE-2015-0504-Knowledge-Centres-Appl-Instr.pdf</a> .
L-Centres	Local Knowledge Centres, part of the CLARIN Knowledge Sharing Infrastructure.	Yes, <a href="https://office.clarin.eu/v/CE-2015-0504-Knowledge-Centres-Appl-Instr.pdf">https://office.clarin.eu/v/CE-2015-0504-Knowledge-Centres-Appl-Instr.pdf</a> .
T-Centres	Trust Centres, providing access to protected resources and services via the Service Provider Federation.	Contact CLARIN Technical Director to get information about requirements for the label. No DSA is required.

### 5.5 Number of Centres Per Country

For some countries the research landscape or the available funding can give the option to have more B-Centres. Germany, for instance, has 10 B-Centres, which to some extent handle different types of resources or are situated in different parts of the country. Each country can choose what they find beneficial for them concerning the number of B-Centres.

## 6 Final Remarks

In this short document we hope to have covered the important questions. We are very interested in feedback that may improve the document. Please contact the author!

## 7 References, Abbreviations and Further Reading

- Assessment of A-centres: <https://www.clarin.eu/content/centre-assessment-procedure>
- Assessment of B-centres: <https://www.clarin.eu/node/3767>
- Assessment reports for B-centres <https://www.clarin.eu/content/assessment-reports>
- Assessment of K-centres: <https://www.clarin.eu/sites/default/files/CE-2015-0504-Knowledge-Centres-Appl-Instr.pdf>
- Centre Registry <https://centres.clarin.eu/>
- CMDI (Component MetaData Infrastructure): <https://www.clarin.eu/content/component-metadata>
- DSA (Data Seal of Approval): <http://www.datasealofapproval.org/en/assessment/>
- Knowledge centres and the Knowledge Sharing Infrastructure <http://www.clarin.eu/content/knowledge-centres>
- OAI-PMH (Open Archives Initiative): <https://www.openarchives.org/pmh/>
- PID (Persistent Identifier): <https://www.clarin.eu/content/pid-service-requirements> and <https://www.clarin.eu/content/comparison-pid-systems>
- VLO (Virtual Language Observatory): <https://vlo.clarin.eu>, and <https://www.clarin.eu/faq/how-does-mapping-vlo-facets-work>