

# Summary of K-centre Monitoring 2019- 2020

December 2020



## 1 K-centres Monitoring 2019-2020, Summary

### 1.1 Introduction

In 2019 the Knowledge Sharing Infrastructure Committee (KSIC) decided to start annual reporting by K-centres. This is done in order to follow the K-centre work and to better understand K-centre issues, thereby enabling the committee to suggest changes and improvements.

The reporting period for this round was 1 September 2019 - 31 August 2020. The questionnaires were distributed to all CLARIN K-centres early September 2020 with a deadline of 30 September.

In September 2020 there were 23 CLARIN K-centres, and they all received the questionnaire. However, answering the questionnaire was not compulsory for those three centres that joined in 2020. The 20 K-centres that had a longer history all answered the questionnaire. The list of K-centres can be found here:

<https://www.clarin.eu/content/knowledge-centres>.

In the following, we briefly summarise the information reported – and in a few cases we mention CLARIN follow-up actions.

### 1.2 Sources: how do requests reach the K-centres?

K-centres use various channels of communication with users, but practically all of them offer a kind of help desk accessible via a web form and e-mail address, and, in many cases a direct telephone number. Thus the three most popular forms of receiving requests from the users by K-centres are:

- e-mails to the centre as an institution, but also to individual persons
- help desk contact form (a web form)
- various forms of direct contact (phone, email etc.)

Links going from a B-centre associated with the given K-centre (probably the same institution) were also mentioned as a source of contacts.

### 1.3 Number of requests

The number of reported requests varies from 0 to 5000 among centres. This large diversity clearly originates from different ways of counting requests and what kind of contact is counted if treated as a request from centre to centre.

- A more commonly agreed way of counting requests will be suggested for the next reporting periods.

If we disregard the extreme cases we get a general picture of 1 to 110 requests.

- CLARIN will support the K-centres by making them more visible and easier to find for the users.

## 1.4 Proactive activities

Almost all centres prepared different kinds of materials for users, for example: how-to-do documents, video recordings, FAQ list, workshops, ... And half of the centres have updated website information and offer news about their activities.

Various kinds of training activities or practical workshops were reported by the vast majority of centres. The amount of participants in workshops, training sessions or live demo activities varied from case to case, but normally 30-50 persons on average attended these events. In three centres the amount of participants was bigger than 100.

## 1.5 Problems encountered

The most problematic cases are user requests that go beyond the areas of expertise of the given centre or beyond the state of the available language technology and infrastructure.

- Concerning the first case, all K-centres try to relegate such requests to other institutions or individual researchers.
- In the case of the second problem, the situation is worse as further development of tools or systems would mean a higher workload for handling the request, e.g. combining tools into more complex systems, implementing new functionalities, improving performance of tools.

A specific problem for the situation this year (2020) was the lockdown affecting operations of some labs. In a similar way requests for in-person visits and tutorials had to be declined, as well as open lectures and invited talks which were cancelled or postponed.

Another important issue were problems related to IPR with materials delivered or requested by the users, e.g.: lack of secure servers for storing/handling text from medical health records or copyright and personal data protection restrictions on materials from social media.

## 1.6 Collaboration among K-centres

Although some K-centres could collaborate because they share topics or aims, as well as many are complementary with respect to the areas of expertise, it was unfortunately hard to find examples of collaboration among K-centres. There are two or three cases of small collaboration among centres in national consortia to promote CLARIN activities.

Many K-centres are willing to collaborate with other K-centres and they think knowing each other can be beneficial for all. Several centres also see the need for re-directing users to other centres if their need is out of the scope of the given centre.

- The K-centre workshop organised early December 2020 was very beneficial in this respect. K-centres now have a better knowledge of the K-centre landscape.

## 1.7 Conclusions

All 20 K-centres that were relevant to the monitoring action sent their monitoring reports. This is a good signal of the positive attitude to cooperation and serious treatment of the K-centre status. K-centres reported a rich variety of the types of requests they serve, e.g. offer consultancy in projects and research from the very first step (writing the project) to offer consultancy, guidance, processing data and adapting tools. In fact all types that were envisaged in the monitoring questionnaire have been reported.

Summing up, it has been very valuable to receive and collate the K-centre reports, as it gives a good understanding of K-centre issues and possible solutions; an understanding that can be used

by CLARIN, and also by the K-centres, as K-centres can learn from each other. This knowledge also provides a very good basis for further collaboration both between CLARIN and the K-centres, and among the K-centres themselves.

The K-centre workshop organised early December 2020 has also been beneficial for the common understanding.